

We Do Our Part

# RAZORCAKE



## TONY MOLINA The Dopamines

We Were There:  
Voices from L.A. Punk's First Wave  
Cheryl Klein Contemplates  
Her Cyborg Boobs  
Class Bigotry  
in Higher Education

#79 | \$4





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DIY punk: profitless and proud.

### WHO WE ARE...

Razorcake provides consistent coverage of do-it-yourself punk culture that you won't find anywhere else. We believe in positive, progressive, community-friendly DIY punk. We do our part. That hasn't changed in fourteen years and it's not about to change.

DIY punk culture is often misrepresented, misunderstood, and the target of corporate exploitation. Razorcake supports a legit community of punk music and culture as the only bona fide 501(c)(3) non-profit music magazine in America.

Our bi-monthly fanzine is a one-of-a-kind resource for the DIY punk community. Over the years, Razorcake has developed this resource to help document every facet of this culture. The Razorcake Gorsky umbrella also includes book publishing, record pressing, live shows and readings, and a thriving web presence that maintains weekly podcasts, webcomics, and videos.

Our open participation policy means anyone can become a contributor. Currently, Razorcake offers a forum for over 180 long-term independent volunteer writers, photographers, illustrators, and musicians from around the world. We take pride in our scenes and represent them internationally. We also distribute the magazine to over twenty countries.

DIY punk is an exciting, evolving culture that can thrive outside of corporate interests. Our goal is to continue operating a modern framework where this community of independent, DIY punk can continue.

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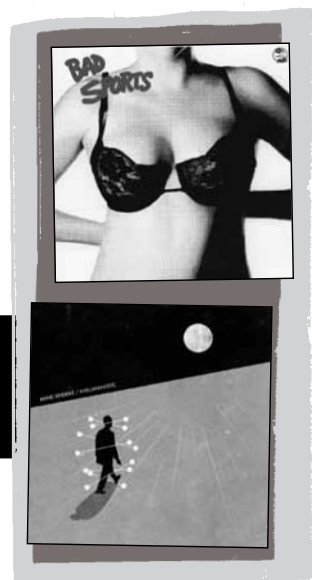
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## Who's Got the Power?

Razorcake is an honest reflection and catalyst for DIY punk rock, and those are our greatest strengths. We're intentionally based in East L.A. and have been for fourteen years. We've conducted face-to-face interviews that span generations of East L.A. punk rockers since 2001. We've recorded their stories in their own words. Jimmy Alvarado alone is cumulatively responsible for hundreds of pages of oral histories. It's an egalitarian meritocracy all around.

Despite all those efforts, we're largely ignored by academics, historians, institutions of higher learning (with a few notable exceptions), and the mainstream press when they cover punk. It happens even in our own backyard. It stings a little, but it's not shocking. It's about power, not necessarily facts. It's about "thesis" and "narrative." If facts—actual people, places, and dates—don't fit an author or researcher's perception of a culture they weren't part of, some participants don't get written in. Omission is a powerful tool.

Here's the sort of funny/sad part: DIY punk rock is still dangerous because we—regular people like you and me, not just corporations and institutions—give it life.

We are people who are old enough to know better. People too young to know better. People who don't use punk rock as a one-time filter to move onto safer forms of creative expression that easily offended, skittish people are cool with. We don't just "study" punk rock "data." We are pissed. Forgotten people. Voiceless people. Unpredictable people. I am one of those people.

And, I'm mad. I'm mad that anyone with more power than you or me has the ability to take what they want and erase the contributions of this community from books and from history, or to twist words out of our mouths to fit a preconceived agenda. That's where institutions come in. Museums. Universities. Governments. Corporations.

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This issue is dedicated to the memories of Chris Peigler and Eugenia Hernandez

**"The past  
is a fog that  
breathes out  
ghost after  
ghost."**

—Ben Fountain,  
*Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*

Cover design by Daryl Gussin  
Photo by Sean Hewitt



Karla Maddog of The Controllers, at the Masque, 1977  
photo by Bibbe Hansen

They're bundlers of power. Power decides what's official history and those stories then get printed and disseminated. I believe in DIY, not "Let Someone Steal from You, Call It Their Own, and Sell It Back to You for a Profit." I'd shop at Hot Topic, buy an armload of Vans, pack them in my new Scion, and drive to Harvard if that were the case.

It didn't surprise me when I heard that the Smithsonian meaningfully screwed up the traveling edition of *American Sabor; Latinos in Popular Music* and they were being jerks about not fixing it. It's called *dominant* culture for a reason. Here are East L.A. punk's highlights, courtesy of the Smithsonian: "It was awesome. The Brat was an all-girl band, Zach de La Rocha was there, and the Hollywood punk scene was racist. Then it disappeared."

Bang. Done. That's our history.

You may be asking "What's the big deal?" right? It's not like lives are at stake or we're talking about slavery, the holocaust, or the Civil War. Fudge the dates. Let these college folks get their dissertations, degrees, chair appointments, tenure, and all that other important life stuff. Ford gets a tax break through its arts foundation, to boot. Uneducated (or "under-educated") people with questionable haircuts still shouting loud, funny words, they don't mean anything. Oh, but wait. They're some of the very same people who got *harvested*. Or is that *colonized*?

Damn.

I was delighted when Alice Bag asked Razorcake to help tell the story of the first wave of punk rockers in Southern California, because it plays to Razorcake's strengths. The story told meant something then. It's historically significant, and it applies directly to today. It's about forging an identity and a vibrant culture that, on its best days, is fair, welcoming, and questioning. Ethnicity, gender, class—all are in play. Shit's fun. But it's not only about the past. It's about who has the right to tell yesterday's stories tomorrow. Those stories don't exist for the dominant culture to make stronger cages and shorter leashes.

Take comfort in the huge difference that exists between being small and being non-existent.

We're still fuckin' here.

—Todd Taylor

**Razorcake / Gorsky, Inc. Board of Directors:** Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Daryl Gussin, Dan Clarke, Katy Spining, Leo Emil Tober III, and Catherine Casada Hornberger.

**THANK YOU:** Lions at the chain link fence, greeting card scanned for the border thanks to Daryl Gussin for the Tony Molina cover design and interview; tiny tornado thanks to Sean Hewitt for the cover photo; "Where do you want to be tomorrow?" thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Hey, that's not the map-pointing finger. That's north. Thanks to Jackie Rusted's illo. in Jim's column; Seven-armed photocopier octopus thanks to Bill Pintel for his illo. in Cassie's column; "Always put one in the brain!" thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Norb's column; Is Andy's ass gluten free? thanks to Chloe Clayton for the Tenement and Holy Shit! photos in the Chicken's column; Can a fist be a hand hugging itself? thanks to Cassie J. Sneider for her illo. in Caitlin's column; Hair removal thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Nardwuar's interview with The Sonics; Babylonian Gorgon thanks to Alice Bag, Kari Hamaana, Yvonne Drazan, Candice Tobin, Louis Jacinto, Dawn Wirth, Lynda Burdick, Seal, Pete Landswick, Janet Carroll, Michelle Habel-Pallan, and all the first-wave L.A. punks for their hosting, tending, shaping, curation, participation, and photos for "We Were There"; "I care about the working class, so that makes me a leftist" bravo! thanks to Chris Pepus, Eric Baskauskas, and Matt Average for the article, illo. and layout of "Class Bigotry in Higher Education"; "Post dual mastectomy courage and encouragement thanks to Cheryl Klein, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Lauren Measure, and Danielle Orner for "The Body Eclectic: Sara Hendren Rethinks Devices for the Disabled, and I Contemplate My Cyborg Boobs" article, photos, graphic design, and modeling; Travel miles in seconds thanks to Sean Hewitt and Ringo Rock Yay for their photos in the Tony Molina interview; Third time's a charm. The first two Dopamines interviews were incoherent. This one talks about baby's buttoles thanks to Kevin Dunn, Patrick Houdek, and Wells Tiple for the interview, photos, and layout.

#79's rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers—in roughly the order they turned their reviews in: Adam Mullett, Brent Nimz, Claire Palermo, Kayla Greet, Vincent, Rich Cocksedge, John Mule, Mike Frame, Sean Arenas, Ryan Leach, Craven Rock, Sal Lucci, Kurt Morris, Keith Rosson, Garrett Barnwell, Michael T. Fournier, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Chad Williams, Matt Seward, Camylle Reynolds, Matt Werts, Art Ettinger, Billups Allen, Mark Twistworthy, Norb, Sean Koepenick, Matthew Hart, Bryan Static, Paul J. Comeau, Jim Joyce, Tim Brooks, Juan Espinosa, Nicole Macias, Ty Stranglehold, Chris Terry, Aphid Peewit, Ryan Nichols, Ian Wise, Russ Van Cleave, Kevin Dunn, Bianca Barragan, Simon Sotelo, and MP Johnson.



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# RAZORCAKE

Issue #79 April / May 2014

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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is: Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, James Hernandez, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Phill Legault, Chris Baxter, Mary Clare Stevens, Marty Ploy, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Derek "Ball Pit" Whipple, Alice Bag, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Rishbha Bhagi, Adrian Chi, Megan Pants, Alex Martinez, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Jimmy Alvarado, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztl Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Yvonne Drazan, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Chris Pepus, George Lopez, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Johnny Volume, Jennifer Federico, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Arnold Benedict, Nighthawk, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Sneider, Eryc Why, Vadim Dozmorov, Ricky Vigil, Brad Dwyer, Ronnie Sullivan, Marcus Solomon, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Jason Armadillo, Laura Collins, Nation of Amanda, Eric Baskauskas, Vee Liu, Mars Bravo, Timothy Tang, Caitlin Hoffman, Bianca Barragan, Cheryl Klein, Russ Van Cleave, Christine Arguello, Simon Sotelo, George Rager, Susan Chung, Robert El Diablo, Bryan Static, Mitch Clem, John Miskelly, Jamie L. Rotante, Aimée Pijpers, and Chris Rager.

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This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by grants from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs and is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles Arts Commission.





## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**“He drove me crazy when he lived with me, but now I miss him.”**

# Alive for a While

I can finally listen to CDs again. My thirty-year-old CD player died a little more than a year ago. Around that same time, my wife and I made the decision to take in her brother while he recovered from a heart transplant. I packed up my CDs and stashed them in the garage to make room for him. I didn't think I'd miss them. I figured I had enough music on vinyl and mp3s.

I was wrong. Too much good shit was buried in my garage. Almost everything I reviewed for *Flipside* or *Razorcake* from 1995 to 2005 was in those boxes. A lot of stuff in the nineties and early 2000s didn't get released on vinyl. It was CD only. This was a good time for music—Dillinger Four and Kid Dynamite's heyday, the rise and fall of surf punk, the reissue of all that great early '80s L.A. punk on disc, the time when every No Idea band bowed at the altar of Leatherface.

Losing this music and getting it back feels better than if I'd had it all along. I'm revisiting everything. I see Panthro UK United 13 in my racks and pop it into my new CD player. Maybe it's the speakers I got to replace the blown out junkers I'd salvaged from a curb a decade ago, but the music sounds better than I remember it, better than I thought it was. I stop what I'm doing and just listen to the second song, “The Sound of Gun.” Guitars push forward with those simple down stroke power chords. The bass is solid right hand throbber. The drums grab hold and jerk me into the song. I can almost feel my neck snap back like the start of a roller coaster ride. Then the vocals come in, a little haunting, “Where do you want to be tomorrow? Is it where you find yourself today?”

I've listened to these lyrics a few hundred times over the past fifteen years. I've asked myself that question repeatedly. And today I am pretty much where I want to be tomorrow. Still, this song is pulverizing me right now. I'm feeling too much to separate any emotion out of the mix. I'm glad no one's around, because I just might cry.

My brother-in-law lived with me for a little over nine months. During that time, I would check on him every morning. First thing every day: see if Felinor is alive. I'd watch and wait to see his chest rise and fall, or I'd touch him to make sure he was still warm. Our apartment is so small, I could see

him sleep from the front door. He'd still be asleep when I left for work most weekdays. Sometimes, I'd open the front door, then slam it. Just to see that he could still move. He'd rustle under the blankets. I'd open the door again and walk out.

For nine months, I woke up every morning thinking about death. It took a toll.

Now, I have Space Cookie playing on my CD player. They were a band Todd pulled out of the slush pile and sent to me. You've probably never heard of them, despite the glowing review I wrote for this album in *Flipside*, circa 1998. I doubt you could find the disc or buy it anywhere now. I don't think anyone in the band went on to do anything else. The album seemed to come and go. It's one of my all-time favorite albums, anyway. My apartment is full of music right now: Space Cookie in every crevice.

When I was a kid in Florida and I'd get sunburned, I'd take a knife and cut a stem off one of the aloe plants that were in everyone's front yard, peel back the hard green shell, and get at the gooey inside of the aloe. I'd rub that against my skin and it felt better than if I'd never gotten burnt in the first place. That's how this album sounds to me right now.

I got pretty fed up with taking care of my brother-in-law back in November. It was so easy in the first days after the transplant. He was so weak, so vulnerable. I didn't mind cooking for him, making sure he ate healthy. Only healthy foods were in the apartment. I didn't mind cleaning up after him, washing his clothes, making sure the kitchen would pass any health inspection and no bacteria could attack his weakened immune system, helping him through his rehabilitation, forcing him to exercise when he felt lazy, listening to all his stories even when it seemed like there were only four stories and he told them each a dozen times a day. It was easy, in part, because he was young. His body was recovering. Things were getting better every day.

As soon as he could do something for himself, I stopped doing it for him. After a few months, he could walk a mile. I live within a half mile's walk of grocery stores, doctors' offices, banks, the downtown area, the beach, several parks, a movie theater, the post office, and just about everything else Felinor might need. He couldn't drive

because of all the medication he was on, but he could walk. He had money. He could be autonomous. I demanded it.

By the time November rolled around, he seemed bored with his second chance on life. He'd mostly stopped doing it for himself. His grocery shopping started to take place at the dollar store. Not because he was poor; he wasn't. Because he'd decided—heart transplant or not—that Top Ramen and power bars were a healthy diet. He started to live off them. He also stopped bathing around this time. This was not good. When adults live in a small apartment, everyone has to bathe.

I understood what was happening. He was depressed. Clinically. If someone else's heart were in my chest, if my life expectancy suddenly shrank to less than a decade, I'd be depressed, too. And this doesn't take into account the other things in Felinor's life that I don't want to talk about—now or ever again. Like his wife abandoning him while he was in the hospital. In the year after his transplant, she let him see his kids once.

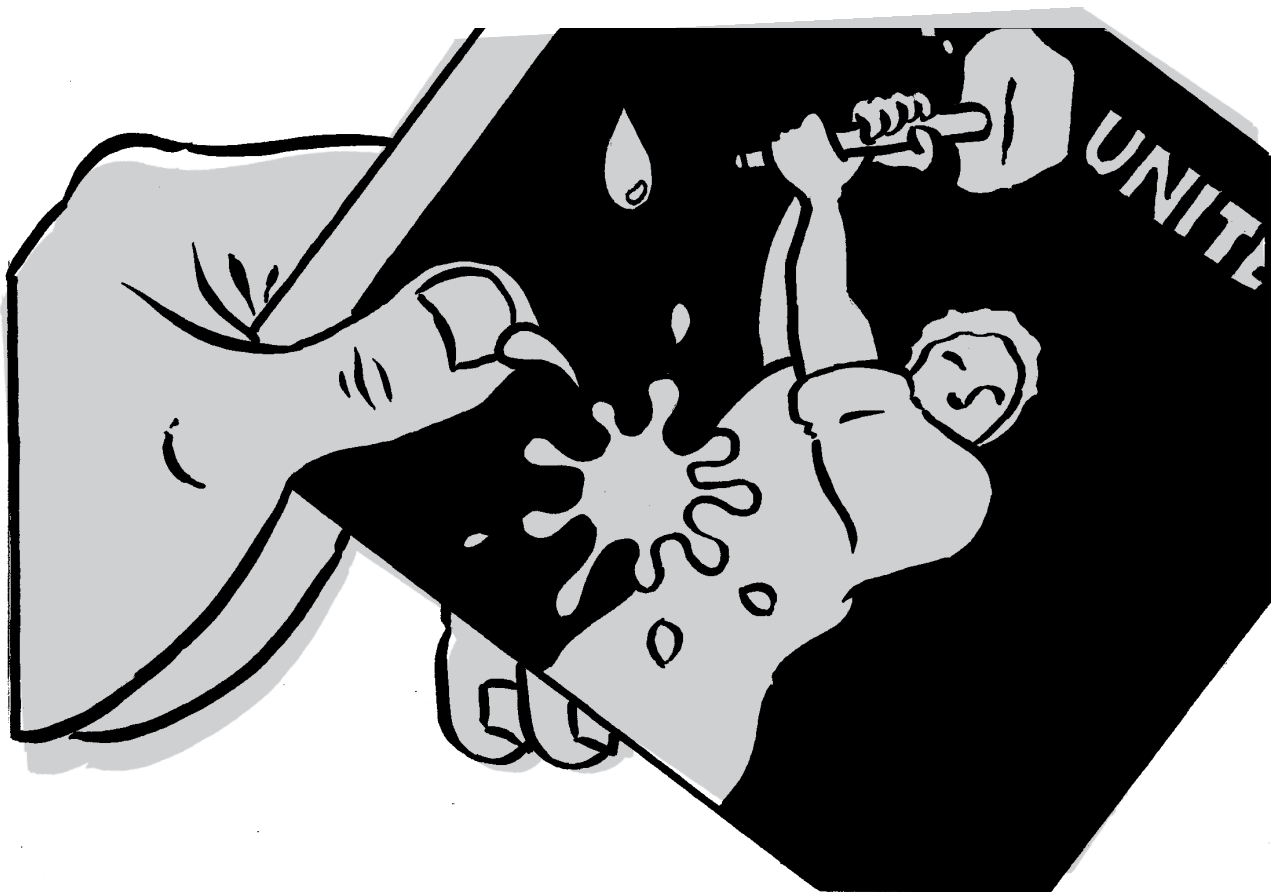
I came home one day in November and stepped into the cloud of Felinor's stink. He sat at the kitchen table, rummaging through all of his pills—anti-rejection medication and blood thinners and whatnot. He told me the same joke he told me three times a day: “I came down to Southern California to do drugs.” The remnants of a pot of Top Ramen sat crusty on the stove. I changed my clothes and went out for a run, just so I could be somewhere else.

I was mad at Felinor. He'd been given a second chance on life and he wasn't doing anything with it. I'd invested all this time on his care, and now he wasn't taking care of himself. What was it all worth? These thoughts kept running through my head.

I took the pedestrian bridge over the freeway and down to the shore, ran past the pier and the playground in the sand and the surfers at C-Street. And I listened to myself and my criticisms of Felinor. What is he doing with his life? Why did I invest this time? What was it worth? It occurred to me that I was being a total fucking capitalist about the whole situation.

I was thinking about time as if it were a natural resource. Something you *do* something with. As if I were a multinational corporation and life were a resource-rich, otherwise poor nation. I should go in and exploit it for all it's





BRAD BESHAW

# Losing this music and getting it back feels better than if I'd had it all along.

worth. Make the most out of it. Maximize my profit while I still could, before I had to pull out and leave everyone devastated.

Or, that my time was literally money. I invested it. I pooled my time savings and let it ride on Felinor, expecting some sort of return on it: a pleasant old age when Felinor is reunited with his kids, watching them graduate high school or get married or whatever.

And what was it all worth? As if my efforts were a commodity. I could assess the value of it on an open market, list it on eBay, and maybe make some scratch.

Where does this capitalist metaphor end? Everyone I talked to when I was taking care of Felinor talked about me spending time with him and giving so much. All these verbs: spend, donate, invest, give. How did I come to think of life so much in terms of the marketplace?

At its very core, time is not a commodity. Strictly speaking, time doesn't exist. Change exists. The energy and elements of the universe are constantly in flux—moving, fluttering, falling, living, dying, rearranging, creating,

destroying. Energy creates gravitational forces. Objects move around each other. The sun shines on the portion of Earth where we linger for a while and then Earth spins away from it. Sometimes, we're closer to the sun and sometimes we're farther away. These rotations occur with enough regularity for us to call them days and nights, seasons and years. But time—like the numbers we use to designate it—doesn't really exist. You can't show me a two or a 12:30. These are abstract concepts that refer to quantity or rate of change. Abstract concepts are not commodities. We can't spend it, invest it, donate it, give it, do anything with it. We just live until we die.

Felinor didn't make it. I did not find him cold one morning. He'd gone over to hang out with his friend Vic in West L.A. for a few days. I found out later that Vic did the same thing I did when Felinor stayed with him. First thing every morning, he checked to see if Felinor was still alive. On the morning of Christmas Eve 2013, Vic noticed that Felinor's chest wasn't rising and falling.

He didn't rustle for any loud sounds. When Vic touched him to see if he was still warm, Felinor was cold.

He drove me crazy when he lived with me, but now I miss him.

The back bedroom where Felinor stayed when he got out of the hospital is my office once again. I took the bed out. My desk is now exactly where he used to sleep. Sometimes it feels like his ghost might roll over onto my laptop while I type.

For all my talk of breaking out of the marketplace mindset, that new CD player and those new speakers are everything to me now. I'm playing all the albums that have been lost to a universe in flux. The Smears. The Crumbs. The Put-Downs. All that Snuffy Smile stuff: Three Minute Movie, Navel, I Excuse, and Longball To No One. One disc after another. Swimming in old favorites.

The first Thumbs album just ended. I never quite realized how good it sounded.

—Sean Carswell



RAZORCAKE 07





**“Basically, I was going to die.”**

# Vertigo

The Bering Sea is trying to kill me.

I know what you're thinking. That's ridiculous. What does the Bering Sea want with a middle age punk rocker?

I can explain. Two years ago I got a call from an Alaska crab fisherman named Scott Campbell, Jr., captain of the fishing vessel *Seabrooke*. If you're a fan of the show *Deadliest Catch* on the Discovery Channel, those names might sound familiar as Scott, who goes by Junior, has been on the show since 2011.

Junior wanted to write a book about his fishing career and was looking for someone to help him tell his story. Though I knew very little about commercial fishing, I'd seen the show and was impressed by the skill, courage, and fortitude it took to do such a dangerous job under such perilous conditions.

But it was more than that. In becoming a fisherman, Junior had followed in his father's footsteps—much as I had done when I, the son of a Naval officer, enlisted in the U.S. Navy. I knew what it was like to struggle to live up to the expectations of someone who was difficult to please. This was a story I already knew.

I met up with Junior in Hollywood while he was in town for the premier of *Deadliest Catch*. Junior was a natural storyteller—he's a fisherman after all—and he had no qualms of making himself look bad when he wrecked equipment or injured his finger in a gruesome accident. He thrilled me with stories about epic storms, massive seas, and waves that rise to incomprehensible heights.

We worked on a proposal and sent it off to my agent and after a couple of weeks he found a buyer for the book. As far as I'm concerned, Junior's stories sealed the deal. It was just a matter of finding the right outlet for them.

We made arrangements for me to fly up to Junior's home in Walla Walla, Washington and interview him and his family for three days. Walla Walla is about 3,500 miles from Dutch Harbor and the Bering Sea, but it could sense that I was coming.

The Bering Sea has killed lots of people. A Dutchman by the name of Vitus Bering gave the sea its name and was promptly killed by it, lost in a winter storm.

It is a place where the waves tower and winds roar with such ferocity that it feels like it's got a beef with humanity.

Men have been going to the Bering Sea to seek their fortune for centuries. First it was hunters in search of seals for their pelts and then fishermen came for the crab that feeds along the edge, a place where seas drop from a depth of one hundred feet to several miles.

When the current pushes up against the edge it creates enormous waves of immeasurable violence. When you add the action of winter storms into the mix, the Bering Sea churns with waves the size of buildings, and not just for a day or two but for weeks.

The seminal book about Alaska crab fishermen is *Working on the Edge: Surviving in the World's Most Dangerous Profession* by Spike Walker who worked on crab boats from 1976 to 1984. His book documented the death toll that earned crab fishing its rep as one of the deadliest jobs in the country, if not the world.

In the late 1970s, it was a derby style fishery where anyone with a boat could come up to Alaska and make a go of it. Many people did and many people died. It was an industry in need of regulation and reform, which came in fits and starts. It's a much safer industry now—when things go as planned. When things break down, the Bering Sea is still one of the most dangerous places on earth.

I flew up to Walla Walla on a Friday and we spent the evening talking with Junior about his adventures at sea. It was a relaxing evening with a dinner of king crab that he barbecued on the grill. When it was time to call it a night, he sent me to my motel in his dad's truck and I went to bed early.

I woke up around four in the morning to use the bathroom. I got out of bed and looked down at my slippers, wondering if I should put them on when—wham!—I hit the deck. I fell over on my hands and knees, toppled onto my side, and rolled onto my back. The room was spinning crazily. It was impossible to orientate. I tried to sit up but I couldn't. I felt like I was drunk and someone had jumped me from behind, except I was all alone and hadn't had a drop to drink in years.

I crawled back to bed. The room wouldn't stop spinning. I say, “spin” but the movement wasn't horizontal like a top but vertical like a slot machine.

I curled into a fetal position and tried not to be sick, but I was intensely nauseated. I keep thinking about the biography of David Foster Wallace I'd

read and how he always corrected people when they said nauseous when they meant nauseated. I was fucking nauseated.

After three hours of demented carousel spins and crippling nausea, I looked up “morning vertigo” on my phone. I wanted to know what the fuck was wrong with me. The results were not heartening: it was an inner ear disturbance, Ménière's disease, or a brain tumor.

*If vertigo interferes with walking, consult a doctor right away.*

Basically, I was going to die.

I texted Junior and told him I needed to go to the ER. He said he'd be right over. I tried to get dressed, but it was a struggle. The dizziness was bad, but the nausea was worse. It took the fight right out of me. I was ready to be emptied. I was ready to concede defeat. By the time Junior showed up, I was dry heaving into a trashcan.

We rolled up to the ER. Junior got a wheelchair and pushed me inside.

A nurse hooked me up to a machine that took my blood pressure. She placed a clip on my fingertip to monitor my pulse. A weird-looking doctor with earrings and ginger hair came in and started asking me questions.

“You have vertigo,” he said.

No shit, I thought.

He said he was going to administer some blood tests and an EKG, and give me something for the dizziness and the nausea.

“What's causing the vertigo?”

“Labyrinthitis.”

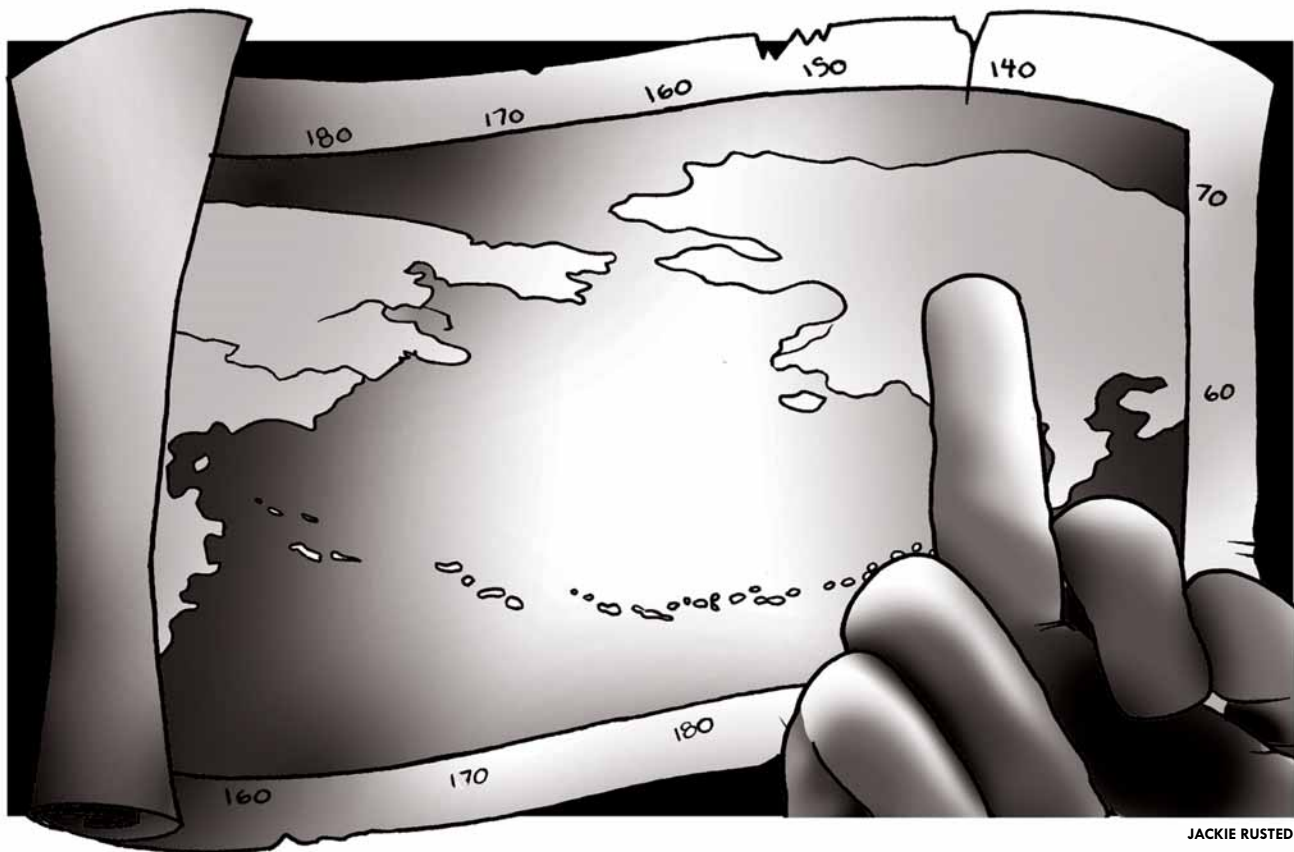
I didn't believe him. It sounded like something he made up. It sounded more like a psychological condition than a physiological one. It sounded like something you'd find in a Latin American horror novel that had been locked in a chest in the basement of a lunatic asylum for one hundred years.

“The workings of the inner ear are very mysterious,” he said.

The nurse came to take my blood. I told her I was afraid of needles, which is what I always say since my arms are covered in tattoos, but she didn't laugh. When she put the needle in, she said “poke” like a caption in a cartoon.

They gave me an Ativan (a benzodiazepine similar to Valium) and Antivert, which is basically motion sickness medicine. Junior keeps some in the *Seabrooke*'s first aid kit, just in case.

At the drive-thru pharmacy, I got generics for the Antivert (Meclizine) and the Zofran



# The Bering Sea whispered to me in my dreams. Stay away, it said. Stay...the fuck...away...

(Ondansetron). The drugs made me drowsy and I drifted off to sleep while watching college football.

The Bering Sea whispered to me in my dreams. Stay away, it said. Stay... the fuck... away...

I felt a little bit better the next day and was able to fly home without blowing out my eardrums, spewing vomit down the aisle, or pulling a freak out of Hunter S. Thompson proportions.

It turns out that vertigo, while scary, is not uncommon and mild cases like mine are easily treatable with something called the Modified Epley Maneuver, which you can do for free at home.

After about a week, I was symptom free. But I'd gotten the message. The Bering Sea was serious.

But I refused to back down. Even though I knew that motion sickness could trigger another episode of vertigo, I was determined

to go fishing with Junior on the Bering Sea. I booked my flight to Dutch Harbor, Alaska where I would meet up with the *Seabrooke* and go out to the crab grounds.

Looking out the window of my plane from Anchorage, I studied the treeless, ice-covered islands of the Aleutian chain. It seemed inconceivable that humans could survive in that volcano-pocked, wind-blasted wasteland of ice.

But the Bering Sea sill had some tricks up its sleeve.

It sent sea ice down from the north, wreaking havoc with the logistics of the *Seabrooke's* fishing and delivery schedule. Long story short: the boat would be in port for the duration of my visit to Dutch Harbor. Instead of braving the waves and showing the sea what I was made of, I spent the bulk of my time in the boat while it was tied up at the pier or at the UniSea Sports Bar and Grill eating overpriced chicken wings and listening to Alaska fishermen murder karaoke.

Bering Sea 2. Ruland 0.

When I got back to California I went to work on the book. I spent six months getting it into shape. A lot of ghostwriters get a flat fee and once they turn in the manuscript they never hear from their subject or their publisher again. That wasn't the case with me. I got a very fair deal, my name is on the cover, and I continue to talk with Junior and his family. I'm proud of the work I did and excited to share these stories with the world. It comes out on April 2.

It has the very punk rock title: *Giving the Finger*. We decided to call it *Giving the Finger* because Junior lost one of his fingers in a fishing mishap that defined his career.

As for me, it's my fuck you to the Bering Sea.

—Jim Ruland





when I was in high school I used this line to get my mom to let me do things she otherwise might have said "No" to

But, I'll only be 16 ONCE.



Take note kids: it worked 100% of the time!

I remember standing in my mom's room, using that argument to get her to drive my best friend and I to San Diego Comic Con in 1997.



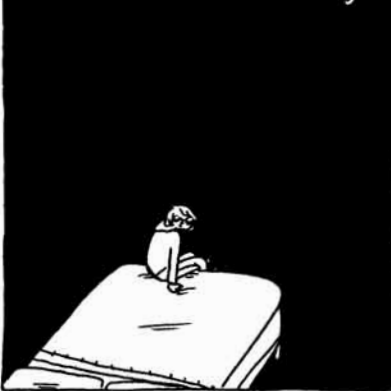
This January, in almost the same spot, I shared a once-in-a-lifetime experience with my mom and sister when our family's first cat died peacefully at home



But you're the only person who will ever exist in your place at your time.



It's not alienating.



It's exciting.





## Shanty Cheryl's Photo Page


Pins Of Light at the Prospector, Long Beach, California



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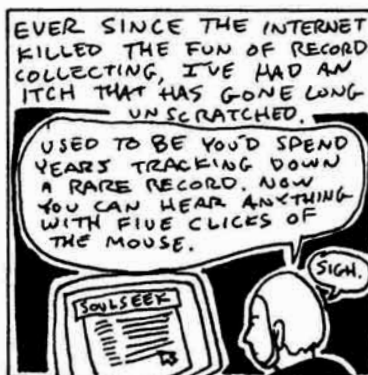
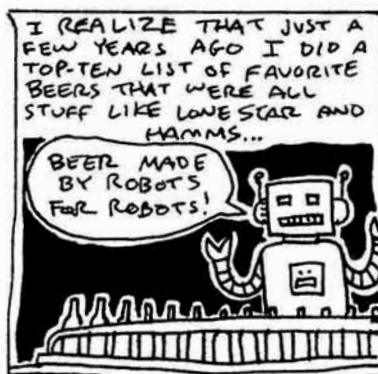
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**"Into the exciting  
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realities!"**

# Let It Bleed

After my failure as seedy interstate strip club cocktail waitress, I landed a job as a high school tutor. It remains the only time in my adult life when I was asked for proof I graduated college. It cost thirty dollars for my transcripts to be mailed to me, money that could otherwise be used for eating or rent or not proving that I have \$25,000 in unpaid student loans. I decided to get my money's worth for those transcripts by using the office copy machine as much as humanly possible once I was hired. I had just finished my first zine, *Tour '88*. I scouted out the office hallway between appointments with students to make sure no one was paying attention and holed up in the xerox room, pretending to be doing something confounding, time-consuming, and work-related.

I made four-hundred copies the first week and left them all over town. I mailed some back home to New York and told friends to leave them where people might read them. The response was overwhelming: I got emails and real letters, all telling me to make more comics. I went to Austin to figure out what I was gonna do with my life and I now had a purpose: PHOTOCOPIES.

All the letters I received made me feel less alone and more a part of some macro-organism of people who stayed up all night getting stuff done. It had always seemed to me that aside from my best friend Laura and a select few others, ninety-nine percent of the world's population went to bed at a normal hour and were able to hold down real jobs without being consumed by feelings of resentment that always lead to office supply theft. There were other Cassies and Lauras out there. I just had to bait them with black-and-white comics on stolen paper.

The downside to this self-discovery was that it wasn't long before I was interrogated by the office manager for the four hundred unaccounted-for copies someone had made. Everyone at House of Tutors was pretty straight-laced, so all signs pointed to the shady new girl who conspicuously wore sleeves in one hundred degree weather. My employment there seemed tenuous at best, so I looked in the phonebook on my break and made an appointment with a temp agency for first thing the next morning.

There isn't a whole lot to becoming a temporary employee. You just need to be able to type and not have any obvious teardrop tattoos. You are pretty much a shoo-in for placement somewhere if you can hold off on

admitting you killed a man in cold blood until your first day on the job. Even so, I still woke up a half hour late for my interview, so I only had fifteen minutes to get ready. For me, job interviews produce the kind of stress and self-doubt that cause animals in the wild to spray pheromones that signal to predators they are weak and ready to die. I only have one or two outfits appropriate for formal employment and they never look right, usually from both a seasonal inappropriateness that causes me to sweat profusely and the fact that they look like they've been thrifted right out of an episode of *Columbo*. Tattoos don't help either. I hastily shaved my legs for good luck, tried to pick an outfit that didn't have any stains, holes, or pictures of the devil printed anywhere, and then bolted out the door into the exciting real world of crushing realities!

Manpower was in a strip mall, between a Ross Dress for Less and a Sheplers. I had settled on brown corduroys (light but almost unnoticeable stain at the knee) even though it was eighty-five degrees and humid, a black western shirt, black shoes, and a black cardigan. I didn't exactly know if I matched or not, but I figured as long as the tattoos I had just gotten on my hands and wrists weren't too visible, I was a surefire hire.

Jean, the office manager, had the overdone rouging of someone who probably sold Mary Kay at one point and had been living off mauve, brown, and electric blue samples for the last twenty-five years. Her hair was dyed ash-blonde and processed to where it looked flammable, but she was motherly and spoke in an adorable southern drawl that made me want to protect her from open flame. Samantha, the other lady, seemed like she could almost be cool, in a P.J. Harvey-listening, emails forwarded in pink font, LOL-cat sort of way. She had a jet black bob, thick plastic Rivers Cuomo glasses, and was close to my age. She looked over my resume, making notations in the margins and saying things like, "Ah, an English major."

I sat down at what looked like a Commodore 64 for a DOS-based tutorial in typing competency. By the third test, I was pretending I was Matthew Broderick in *War Games*. "Wow!" Jean said as the results edged out of a dot-matrix paper. "You're the fastest typer we've had all week!"

Next was the interview portion of my employment. I waited at a table for Samantha to join me and looked around at the decor. The walls of the Manpower office were

lined by enormous portraits of people of all genders and ethnicities doing different vague jobs and smiling proudly. Asian lady in a business suit. Black guy in surgical scrubs. White guy with mustache and hardhat. On the bottom of each picture were the words, "WHAT DO YOU DO?"

It was a real point to ponder. Until recently, I had no idea. I knew what I wanted to do—write—but that seemed like some faraway goal, like every time I said I was going to work on my posture or wake up at five in the morning to go running. One of these days, I would be a writer. And I would sit perfectly upright in my home office in an expensive leather chair, wearing athletic shoes, perspiring lightly from the jog I had just gotten back from, and I would pen the great American novel. And America, she would love me for it. And when I died, they would bring my cadaver back to Long Island and bury me next to Walt Whitman with a headstone that said, "DIED OWING \$25,000 IN STUDENT LOANS."

When Samantha came back with my scores, I was sitting cross-legged, looking off into a world of my imagination. "Oh, my god," she said.

"That good, huh?" I asked, smiling proudly. "No. You're bleeding." I looked down at my ankle. Unbeknownst to me, I had cut myself shaving that morning for the interview. Apparently, I was also a hemophiliac, because blood had been pouring into my shoe for the last two and a half hours.

"Oh. Huh. It's cool. I do this all the time." That was the point the situation turned from *no big deal to the emergency we've all been waiting for*.

"JEAN!" Samantha screamed over the one cubicle in the small office. "GET THE FIRST AID KIT!"

"No, really, guys. It's fine. I'll eventually stop bleeding."

Jean's powdered face appeared over the office partition, like a meerkat playing an extra in *Pretty Woman*. "Ointment or bandaids?"

Samantha stared in shock at my foot, a civil war medic assessing an amputation. "BOTH."

They made me put seven bandaids on myself before we could go on with the interview. When the excitement dropped down a few notches, they started to ask me work-related questions, even though I was clearly incompetent at wound care strategies and basic first aid.

"So, Cassie, tell me, what are your long term goals?"



BILL PINKEL

## I went to Austin to figure out what I was gonna do with my life and I now had a purpose: PHOTOCOPIES.

"I WANNA ROCK!" screamed the inner eleven-year-old that makes all of my adult decisions. "I WANT TO ROCK!"

"I would love to ultimately wind up in a company that valued my hardworking nature by providing me with a 401K and health benefits."

"What?!" said the eleven year-old. "You don't want that! YOU WANT TO ROCK!"

"Ah, I see," said Samantha, making more notes. "Ideally, in what field?"

"Oh, management or administration," I said out loud.

"Are you kidding me? YOU WANNA ROCK!"

"Mhmm," Samantha noted, nibbling the pen cap. "I see. What do you feel are some of your strengths?"

"ROCKING!"

"Uh, organization, the power to stay on-task and motivated, and, uh, an overall dogged determination to achieve company goals." I was mesmerized by my own ability to put together

sentences that made it sound like I knew what I was doing. If I could spin the web of incredible bullshit big enough, maybe I could whittle down the mounting evidence of my own ineptitude that was already stacked against me: the seasonally-inappropriate outfit, the nervous hyper-vigilance, the war-wounded leg.

"What length of temporary employment would be ideal for you?"

"Oh, as short as possible."

Jean looked up. "As short as possible?"

"I get bored easily. That way, I can go in there, totally revolutionize them, and jump back out, leaving them spinning at the whirlwind of positivity that just happened."

Both Jean and Samantha looked at me with confusion, as if I had suddenly started clipping my toenails. "Well... how long of a duration do you mean?"

"Like three days. Max," I said.

"Usually people ask for long-term or short-term employment," Jean said looking at Samantha.

"We've never had anyone ask to work three days or less." Samantha seemed dismayed. I had taken her out of her metaphorical cubicle and left her in the No Man's Land of my adult brain.

"Well, I suppose I would be open to longer employment, but the first and last three days of working anywhere are the best three days. Am I right or am I right?" I smiled big, just like White Lady in Shoulder-Padded Suit and Hispanic Man in Business Casual.

I got the job anyway. When weighed with my obvious incompetence, my positive attitude tipped the see-saw and I was now a qualified temporary employee. Soon, my phone would be ringing off the hook with job offers from companies begging for my exceptional typing skills, glass-is-half-full approach to life, and ready, steady flow of red blood cells.

—Cassie J. Snider





## AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW REV. NØRB

**“Familiar  
modes of  
Nørb-Cop  
intercourse.”**

# DROP THE MISFITS ALBUM, YOU’RE UNDER ARREST

It is a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away ((1986 and Manitowoc, WI, respectively)). I am drinking beer in my drummer’s basement, prior to band practice ((it’s so long ago the Galactic Empire has yet to ban Kingsbury®!)). We are listening to the Misfits *Legacy of Brutality* album, a new release ((albeit of old material)) which the bass player has just purchased half an hour ago. We seem to be enjoying it. Midway thru the first side, said bassist, who has been dutifully perusing the album’s back cover, is overtaken by an unexpected bout of buyer’s remorse: “These songs are great,” he begins, “but I dunno about these really long songs on side two. Ten-seventy-seven! Nine-eighty! Six eighty-one!” Short on beer and cigarette money, he offers to sell me the not-yet-played-all-the-way-thru album for five bucks. I fork over a crumpled five. It is only when I take physical possession of the album that I inform him that “10-77,” “9-80” and “6-81” are the dates the songs were recorded, not their times. Score.

Fast-forward five or six hours and a dozen beers. I am dozing ((a lesser man might call it “passed out”)) in the bass player’s passenger seat, as he pulls to the curb across from my apartment back home in Green Bay, my new Misfits album in my lap. Pat shakes me awake, and tells me I’m home. I mutter generic thanks for the ride, and, still half asleep, step out of his car and onto the sidewalk across from my house. I wobble on the curb for a while as Pat drives away, trying to shake the cobwebs—of which there are many—out of my Kingsbury®-saturated noggin. My neighborhood is moderately sketchy for Green Bay at the time; not truly terrible but not a place conducive to long walks at night, either. My local grocery store, where I purchase frozen smelt and the occasional comic book, is Mednikow’s; a few years later, it will be re-tooled as the Concert Cafe, the capital of all ages Wisconsin punk shows for almost a full decade. As I stand on the curb across the street from my house, clutching my album and attempting to become lucid enough to figure out where I am and what, exactly, I’m doing there, two cars with their headlights off zoom out of a side street and come to a rapid, jerking, screeching halt in front of me. For a second, I try to formulate a sentence that will communicate the idea that this is all a misunderstanding; that I’m not the guy that gave their sister a hard time at

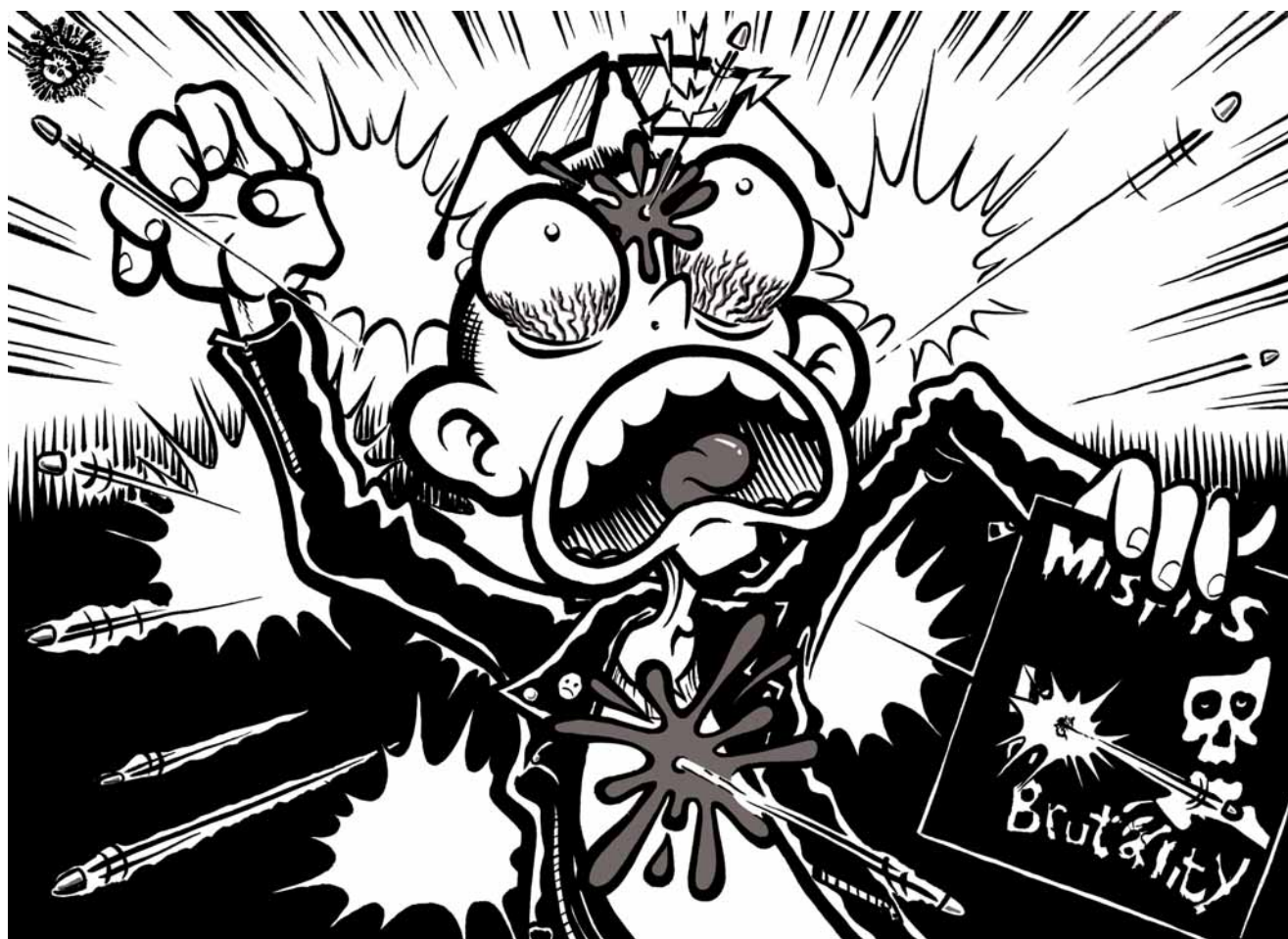
the party or whatever my imagined offense might be; that I’ve just been dropped off and clearly cannot be the guy for whom they’re looking. *Heck, fellas, I’ll help ya find that jerk!* Doors fly open; dudes—very briskly and very menacingly moving dudes—start piling out of the cars and rushing towards me. Clearing out the cobwebs is no longer necessary; I am—quite unexpectedly—suddenly operating on pure instinct. That instinct—not surprisingly—says RUN LIKE FUCKING HELL. So I run like fucking hell down North Roosevelt Street, in an absolute drunken terror, still clutching my Misfits album, which I now wish was that W.A.S.P.’s *F\*ck Like A Beast* picture disc in the shape of a buzzsaw blade, merely for purposes of last-ditch self-defense. A voice rings out of the darkness: “POLICE!!! FREEZE!!! DROP IT!!!” I still have no idea what is going on, or what has gone on, or what will be going on, but my reptilian forebrain realizes that compliance is probably not a bad choice at this point, so I freeze, and drop my Misfits album—my dangerous, dangerous Misfits album—with a sad PLUNK onto the frigid Wisconsin sidewalk. The voice continues: “RAISE YOUR ARMS OVER YOUR HEAD!!! SLOWLY!!!” It reminds me of the part in 1984 where Winston and Julia finally get busted by the telescreen behind the watercolor in their love nest above the antique store. I stick ‘em up with amazing slowness, moving with a deliberateness with which my limbs have never moved before nor since. There are now lights. Lots of lights. And guns. Lots of guns. Pointed at my face. For added levity, there is also a dog; a slaving, ravenous thing not unlike the German Shepherd who ripped the fuck out of my face at age five, jumping and snapping and snarling not two feet from my head. I do not recall, exactly, what happens for the next five or ten minutes; I only recall a sense of complete, perverse calm—for the first time in my life, I am not burdened with the responsibility of making decisions for myself. I will do exactly as the men with the guns say.

It is strangely liberating to no longer have to think for yourself. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, and all that jive. It’s sort of like the Anti-Life Equation for which bad ol’ Darkseid was always searching in Jack Kirby’s *New Gods* and *Forever People* comic books in the early ‘70s: If he ever

got his hands on the Anti-Life Equation, all of existence would immediately become subservient to his will. It appears I’ve just been whopped with the Anti-Life Equation. Who knew it was in the possession of the GBPD all this time?

Eventually—and I have no idea if this takes a minute, five minutes, a half hour, or what, as I am in a completely blanked out state of subservience/coronary—something happens. The dog gets put away, most of the lights get turned off, and my attackers holster their guns. I still remain stock-still, awaiting further orders from my new masters. “So, how ‘bout we see what kind of drugs you’ve got?” This utterance jolts me back from Anti-Life, into more historically familiar modes of Nørb-Cop intercourse. “I don’t have any drugs.” “Sure you don’t.” Not content with an earlier frisking at gunpoint, the police now start sticking their hands into my jacket pockets, turning me inside and out in search of the drugs I don’t have. “I really don’t have any drugs.” I’m right. I don’t. One of the less senior yo-yos on the force trudges up with my Misfits album. The captain shines his flashlight inside the jacket, as the younger guy pushes on the sides to make it gape open, kind of like a weird gynecological exam for vinyl. OH MY GOD, HOW AMAZING, I DON’T STASH POT INSIDE MY VINYL!!! ((however, find my car keys and we can BOTH drive outta here!)) Because, you know, EVERYBODY stashes pot inside their vinyl. EVERYBODY. That’s a real common thing, you know. STASHING LUMPY BAGS OF WEED INSIDE OF RELATIVELY FLAT RECORD JACKETS WILL BE THE DOWNFALL OF AMERICAN SOCIETY!!! The younger cop hands me my Misfits record. Suddenly coming to grips with the fact that I just survived a near-death experience, I muddle-headedly hand it back to him in gratitude for not fucking shooting me: “Keep it, man.” It is the last time I see my Misfits album.

So. Apparently, the deal was that the cops got reports of gunshots in the neighborhood. They zoomed over, in high cop style, and found me standing there, looking sketchy. Eventually, they decided that I wasn’t the shooter, and, after the usual “well, let’s see if this fucker has drugs on him” bit ((essentially a last-ditch ploy to find something that could put a silver lining on their own poor judgment)), they let me walk across the



ALEX BARRETT

For the first time in my life, i am not burdened with the responsibility of making decisions for myself. I will do exactly as the men with the guns say.

fucking street and go crawl into bed and pass out. Cool. I am not killed, i have a nice story to tell, and some precious life experiences i can share. Now, how does one imagine this story would play out if i was actually carrying a firearm at the time? Middle of the night in a sketchy neighborhood, two cars screech out of the darkness, and guys start running out of them at me? SORRY, MOM, BUT I AM PRETTY SURE THAT IF I GOT A GUN, IT'S COMIN' OUT. I mean, no shit! You think you're gonna get jumped by two carloads of guys, fuck yes you are pulling out your gun! "YOU WANT SOME O' THIS??? ARGYBARGY BARGH AARGH RAHHR RAHHRRR!!!" or whatever it is one says in such circumstances. Christ, i would have fucking pulled my gun, those guys would have ventilated me, and i would have been dead at age twenty-one! The headlines would have been "previously assumed harmless punk rocker gets all drunk, pulls gun on cops!" If i owned a gun in 1986, i'd

be fucking DEAD right now, for the high crime of not wanting to have my ass kicked by two carloads of gorillas in the middle of the night, across the street from my fucking apartment! This is why, on average, i do not buy the contention that guns make people safer. I just don't see it. I am sure there are numerous cases where, yes, if you had a gun when some nutjob with an assault rifle was moseying thru your school executing people, you'd be dang glad to have it, and good for you. However, i heard somewhere that you're six times more likely to get shot by a cop in America than by a criminal. I have no supporting evidence to back this claim, mind you, but it seems close enough to what i've observed to strike me as ballpark right. Therefore, mathematically, even if owning a gun brings your odds of being shot by a criminal down to 0% ((doubtful)), if it causes a corresponding 17% rise in the odds of you being shot by a cop ((pretty fucking likely)), you're actually better off forgoing the gat

and fending off the armed lunatics with copies of W.A.S.P.'s *F\*ck Like a Beast 12"*. I mean, people used to buy guns to defend their homes and families and hope to hell they never had to use them; nowadays people buy guns and hope someone breaks into their house, because they think that gives them a free pass to blow some jackoff's brains out. I fail to see how a return to the Yosemite Sam era, on average, increases my personal safety. People should, of course, feel free to arm themselves as they feel their circumstances dictate; me, i'm hoping a potent cocktail of Jedi mind tricks and my dashing good looks will be enough to turn away any potential attacker's wrath.

That, of course, and the token donation of a Misfits album.

Love  
-Norb



BITE THE CACTUS

# FLEX YOUR MUSICIANS' MUSCLES

ADRIAN CHI

MUSICIANS DON'T ALWAYS FEEL LIKE ATHLETES, BUT PLAYING MUSIC IS MY ALL TIME FAVORITE KIND OF EXERCISE, AND PLAYING DRUMS IS WHY I HAVE A HEALTHY HEART RATE & LOW BLOOD PRESSURE. SOMETIMES AT SHOWS, OR EVEN DURING PRACTICE, THE ADRENALINE GETS CRAZY, I'M LESS CAREFUL, AND I END UP HURTING MYSELF. SCREW THAT! I WANNA BE PLAYING UNTIL I'M 80 AT LEAST! TO KEEP THE ACES AND PAINS AWAY

TRY SOME OF THESE!



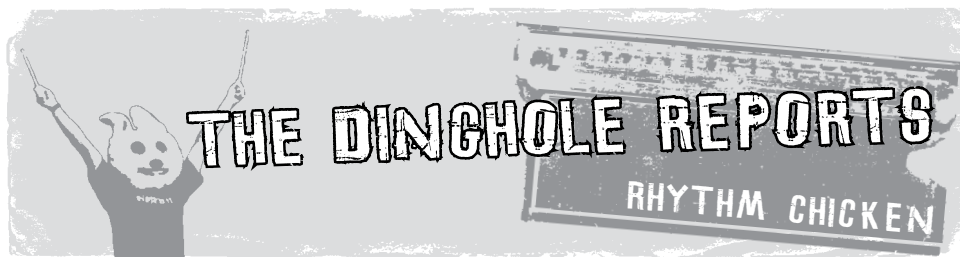
ALWAYS REMEMBER TO MOVE SLOWLY, BREATHE DEEPLY AND ONLY DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT





**Dan Monick's Photo Page**  
09/12/2013





**“A whirlwind of flying wings, talons, and drumsticks.”**

## A Hasty Escape From the Circle-A

It's Sunday night. The Super Bowl starts in about one hour and I couldn't care less. I just finished the best weekend of my winter. My back hurts, my feet hurt, my liver hurts, but my heart and soul are happy and full. My hands are scabby and bruised from drumming. My shirt is covered in splash marks of dried soup. My ears are still ringing from the live punk rock that just about tore my face off two nights ago, right in my own kitchen. Super Bowl? What Super Bowl?

Spend any amount of time with the average Midwesterner and you'll notice one thing, we *love* to talk about the weather. Maybe that's because we get a lot of it? Maybe it's because we don't have much else? I like to think it's because most of our parents and grandparents were farmers and the weather greatly affected their general livelihood. Nonetheless, we tend to talk about the weather.

So, how about this polar vortex, eh? Yeah, which one? Two weeks ago was a polar vortex. This week is an arctic vortex. The temps have not been up to the freezing/melting point in about sixty days. It seems every two weeks we are faced with another vortex of some over-sensationalized nature. I've been battling the freezing pipes night after night, and the glacier of an ice dam on my rooftop is getting to be about fifteen inches thick. I especially love those three or four days when the high temps don't even get above zero! So, yeah, it's been cold.

I like to think this winter started on Thanksgiving Day. We got about six inches of snow that morning. A few days later our first subzero temps set in. December was a blur of bone-chilling winds and repeated snowfalls. By New Years Eve there was a good two feet of snow all around my soup shop. My hen and I decided to ride the sleigh down to the big city. After three hours of sliding down I-43, the heat in my sleigh finally kicked in just as we pulled into Milwaukee. Once in Milwaukee things warmed up a bit; up into the single digits. That's when it started snowing.

**Dinghole Report #139:  
Chicken Rocks the Half-Assed  
Room at the Circle-A!  
(Rhythm Chicken  
sighting #674)**

The Circle-A Cafe is nestled back in a hidden corner in the Riverwest neighborhood. This place is truly a treat. First, the Circle-A

is only open on weekends or other special days. The shows start early and end early. The place is carpeted and feels like someone's living room. There are amazing old rock posters and vinyl records tacked to the walls. Warrick, the owner, wore a white sport coat and black bow-tie. My friends, Aluminum Knot Eye, are playing and the place is rockin'. I dragged Andy from Holy Shit! out to my car and piled drums into his arms.

Andy suggested the Chicken play in the *half-assed room*, a bizarre phone-booth-sized room with one barstool and a purple light above. Somehow the chickenkit half squeezed into the half-assed room. The opening drumroll turned every head in the joint back to the new stage. The room may have been half-assed, but the ruckus WAS NOT! I delivered a quick, sloppy blast of rhythmic chaos while the jiffy-pop oven on the backbar popped more delicious popcorn for the thirsty drunks. The anarchy was imminent and the bar was hollerin'! With a full evening still ahead of us, I pushed the panic button and bellyflopped onto the drums, thrashed around a bit, and before I knew it there was a Schlitz tall-boy shoved into my wing. The snow kept falling. Aluminum Knot Eye took the main stage while I sucked down a few more free beers between Andy Junk and Keith from Die Kreuzen. Milwaukee kinda rules.

**Dinghole Report #140:  
A Bunch of Screaming Kids,  
Some Drunk Parents, and  
One Rockin' Rhythm Chicken!  
(Rhythm Chicken  
sighting #675)**

My hen and I made a hasty escape from the Circle-A as midnight approached. We had to swerve down to the southside for a very special New Year's Eve performance. My friend Bill from Rushmor Records had arranged the perfect gig, which I just couldn't ignore. Many of the neighborhood parents around the South Shore Park had rented out the pavilion for their own party. The winds whipped the blustery snow off of Lake Michigan and through the park, but inside the heated pavilion there were about fifty antsy children running around, dancing, and playing games. The parents were there as well, enjoying plenty of libations and filling up the dance floor while the DJ played the hits. It was the perfect setting, and midnight was just moments away.

My hen and I quickly threw the chickenkit together next to the dance floor while a few curious eyes watched and wondered. Then the DJ took the mic and the countdown started. All the kids gathered around and excitedly chanted, "...FOUR! ...THREE! ...TWO! ...ONE! HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!" I started the thunderous drumroll as my little stage was soon surrounded by anxious kids and parents alike. I raised my wings and the pavilion echoed with cheers! Most of the kids and parents have seen the Rhythm Chicken perform in the nearby parade most summers since my hatching. They knew the drill and played their part! I pounded out dose after dose of thunderous New Year's Rock! Even though the kids were screaming wildly, I think the parents were even *more* into it!

Knowing that the youth have a short attention span, I kept the show under just a few minutes. I ended with a whirlwind of flying wings, talons, and drumsticks. As I lay on my back, panting in the ruins of my chickenkit, the children ran in to steal a few drumsticks. A loving parent soon placed a beverage in my wing and the night progressed as expected. We all woke the next morning at Bill's house. There was about six inches of new snow on my car. My hen and I spent about four hours swerving back up to Door County just to find that all my pipes had frozen and the soup shop had no running water, again.

**Dinghole Report #141:  
The Second Annual  
Ephraim Punk Show!  
(Rhythm Chicken  
sighting #678)**

You may remember from last year how I threw the first-ever punk show here in Ephraim, Wisconsin's only dry town. Holy Shit! from Milwaukee drove up and played to fourteen people in my soup shop. It was a small yet monumental event. This year's gig was bound to be bigger. Holy Shit! brought along Tenement, their tour mates from last year's trip to Japan. There was a lot of buzz online in the weeks leading up to the show. A good three feet of snow was on my front deck tables and chairs. The temps outside were hovering around zero, but the thirty-five people crammed into the shop, turned off the heat halfway through the show. The place was burning up!

I carried the kit down from upstairs and quickly set up next to my dishwashing station. The quiet little village buried in snow would





Holy Shit! | CHLOE CLAYTON



Tenement

**My back hurts,  
my feet hurt,  
my liver hurts,**

**but my heart and  
soul are happy  
and full.**

soon erupt in maximum ruckus! I perched myself behind the rickety, rusted drums and rumbled through yet another short set of ridiculousity! The packed house roared. More and more folks kept showing up and cramming themselves into Ephraim's new punk rock concert hall!

After my set, Tabman from Holy Shit! gave me a coin to flip to decide which band would play first. Within minutes, Tabman was behind the mic. Holy Shit! started up and the tiny jam-packed shop became a whirlwind of hardcore chaos! I looked out the window to see if the cops had arrived. When I looked back, Tabman was on top the

crowd getting body passed across the dining room. Moments later, a shirtless Andy Junk rolled around on my soup counter while his clear-epoxy guitar screeched and wailed. I glanced across the room to see my doctor (Dr. Phil, local punk rock doctor) bobbing his head and knocking back a Hamms. Real life truly trumps fiction at times.

Even with the place packed to the rafters, Tenement managed to squeeze their stuff into the kitchen and wasted no time kicking out their maximum noise-pop. Amos and his guitar were pretty much sandwiched between his amp and my cash register. Jesse and Eric were squeezed between the stove

and soup warmers. They rocked the room to its limit. The crowd swirled. The windows sweat. The walls stretched outward. More crowd surfing occurred and soon enough there was a moshpit in my dining room. I thought I had seen it all up until this point.

After the bands were done, people hijacked the stereo and by four AM there were men stripped down to their undies dancing to ABBA. Czarnuszka Soup Bar and Punk Rock Concert Hall, Ephraim Rock City (Door County, Japan).

—Rhythm Chicken

heavy disillusioned doom rock

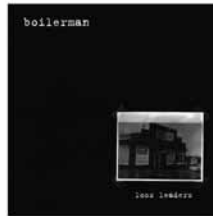
# BLACK BLACK BLACK



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# CHICO SIMIO

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"HOBO  
DREAMS"

• ART •

I HAVE THIS CRAZY  
DREAM THAT WHEN MY  
DAUGHTER GOES OFF TO  
COLLEGE..



I'M GONNA BE A  
HOBO!

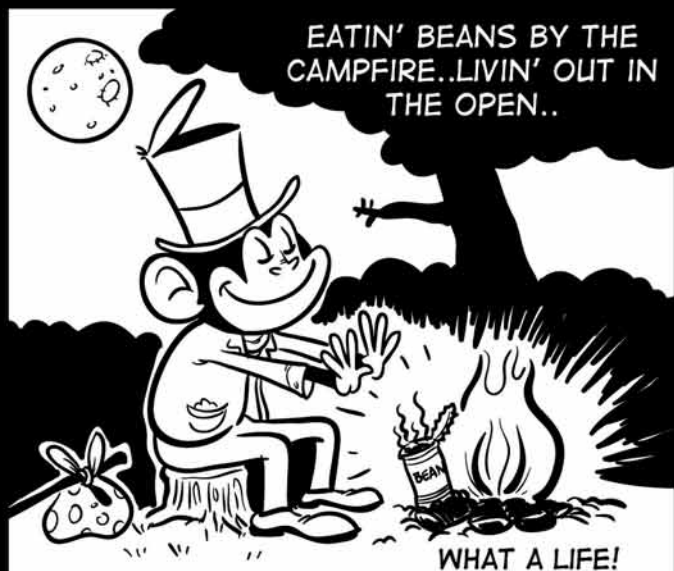
WHAT A LIFE! TRAVELING AROUND,  
RIDIN' THE RAILS..

UNION  
PACIFIC

..HOPPIN' FROM  
TRAIN TO  
TRAIN..



EATIN' BEANS BY THE  
CAMPFIRE..LIVIN' OUT IN  
THE OPEN..



WHAT A LIFE!

BUT THEN  
REALITY  
AND  
COMMON  
SENSE  
WAKE ME  
UP..



I'M POSITIVE THE LIFE OF A HOBO IS NOT AS  
GREAT AS I'VE MADE IT OUT TO BE IN MY HEAD,  
AND I STILL NEED TO PROVIDE FOR ROMANN,  
EVEN THOUGH SHE'LL BE IN COLLEGE. I GUESS  
MY HOBO DREAMS WILL HAVE TO BE PUT ON  
HOLD INDEFINITELY..MAYBE.

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Sweatshop Boys -  
Great Depression LP

HERE'S A GOOD TRICK  
TO HAVE UP YOUR SLEEVE  
APRIL FOOLS OR NOT.  
I LEARNED IT FROM  
A FRIEND AND NOW I  
PASS IT ON TO YOU.



SECRET TOOLS OF APRIL FOOLS

BY LUCKY NAKAZAWA



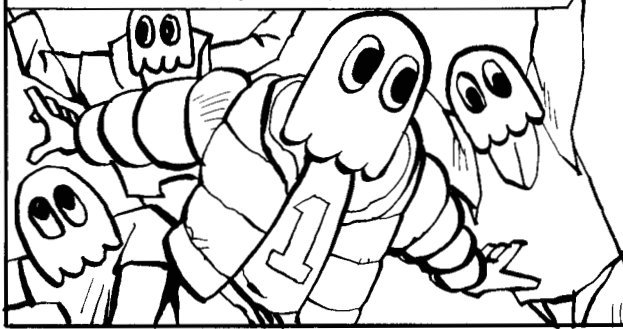
I HAVE A FRIEND, WE'LL CALL HIM WHISKEY  
FOXTROT, WHO WORKED AT A L.A. BAR THAT  
WAS FREQUENTED BY MTV TYPE MUSIC  
CELEBRITIES.



HI!  
I'M WHISKEY  
WITH AN 'E'  
FOXTROT.

HAIL DITKO!

ONE TIME THIS BIG TIME HIP-HOP POP STAR CAME IN  
WITH HIS CREW. THEY WERE ALL DRUNK, IT WAS PAST  
LAST CALL AND THEY DEMANDED MORE BOOZE.



WHISKEY FOXTROT COULD TELL  
THAT REFUSING SERVICE COULD  
GET UGLY. MORE TROUBLE  
THAN THE BAR WAS PRE-  
PARED TO HANDLE AT THE TIME.

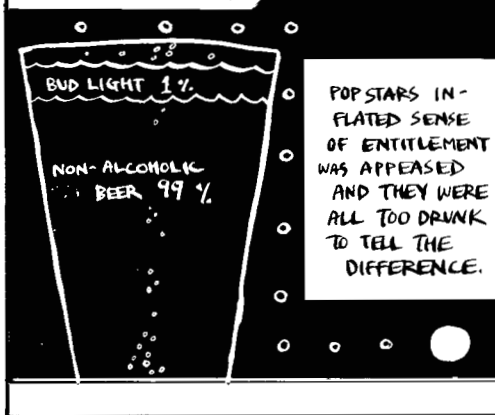
MIDWAY - TIME TAI



KEE-RIST!  
DOUCHE-BAG  
GHOSTS!

SO HE MADE THE GUYS AN OFFER-  
"IF MY BOSS SEES THE DRINKS IN  
YOUR HANDS I'LL GET FIRED..."

"BUT I'LL POUR YOU BEERS IN PLASTIC CUPS  
IF YOU ARE DISCREET." MASTER FOXTROT  
THEN COVERTLY POURED NON-ALCOHOLIC BEER  
INTO CUPS WITH A SPLASH OF REGULAR BEER  
ON TOP FOR SMELL.

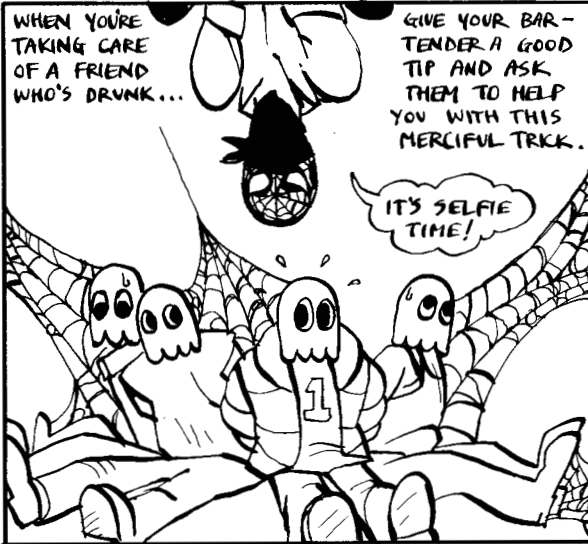


BUD LIGHT 1%

NON-ALCOHOLIC  
BEER 99%

POP STARS IN-  
FLATED SENSE  
OF ENTITLEMENT  
WAS APPEASED  
AND THEY WERE  
ALL TOO DRUNK  
TO TELL THE  
DIFFERENCE.

WHEN YOU'RE  
TAKING CARE  
OF A FRIEND  
WHO'S DRUNK...



GIVE YOUR BAR-  
TENDER A GOOD  
TIP AND ASK  
THEM TO HELP  
YOU WITH THIS  
MERCIFUL TRICK.

IT'S SELFIE  
TIME!

WHERE'S THE DELICIOUS HOSTESS FRUIT PIES WITH THE REAL FRUIT FILLING AND  
THE LIGHT, TENDER CRUST?

KN 2/4



**“There’s glory in being a misfit, but there’s also fear and loneliness.”**

# For the Sad Kids

At work, I heard a woman talk about suicide.

Her cousin had killed himself several years before. She lamented the loss along with how quick some people are to make light of emotional struggle.

“All these Facebook posts say, ‘Smile, it’ll get better.’ But for some people, it doesn’t!”

I called across the room, an idiot in my empathy: “I don’t mean to eavesdrop, but I couldn’t help but overhear and... I’m sorry for your loss. I’m a suicide survivor, and what you’re saying really struck a chord in me.”

As soon as “survivor” escaped my clumsy lips, I went beet-red from my nose to my liver. I’d undressed in front of strangers, but I’d never been so naked.

People dislike honest sales clerks. They’d rather we shut up and leave the philosophy to people with degrees. When we step beyond our social niche, customers get uncomfortable.

Lucky for me, the woman appreciated my meager input and was quick to share her own depression. We spoke of mutual pains, but even as I told the truth, I was too far away to secure a connection.

When I talk to people, all I seek is a spiritual bond, a raw intimacy that says “fuck you” to social protocol. I want to strip the masks we wear for society’s sake, spread our sins out on the table, and love each other for being human.

Yet here I was, face-to-face with a fellow misfit, and I rejected a potential friendship.

I couldn’t relate to her hardship any more than I can relate to my past.

I’m surprised to remember my suicide attempt. It’s surreal, like one of the books I haven’t finished editing. Labeling myself a “suicide survivor” in the middle of my day shift made me feel like a fraud, even though it’s true.

Eight years ago, a little girl tried to die. I know it was me... but it feels like someone else.

Self-awareness is the problem. I was watching a Bukowski documentary and they mentioned *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* being released in 1992. I jabbed my partner in the rib, proud to declare the year my birth date. Then I realized, “Fuck... I’m young.”

“I know!” he agreed. “That year *just* happened!”

Then I remember how much younger I was when I tried to kill myself.

*I’m thirteen. The knives are too dull to make a difference. So I count the pills—Tylenol, Advil, Seroquel—and swallow, bidding my diary goodbye. I make a bee-line to the bed...*

At the time, I wanted to die. Hormones, fights with mum’n’dad, and social torture at school (from “peers” and teachers alike) all exacerbated the depression that, thanks to my genetics, was an inevitable hurdle for my brain. My synapses were stuffed with bile and I had the emotional maturity of a cocker spaniel.

When people ask me, “Why did you try to kill yourself?” all I can say is: “I had no coping mechanisms.”

It’s a cheap answer, made cheaper when I consider all I could have lost (and all I put my family through).

I remember the doctor called me “lucky”; my kidneys had only just managed to wiggle away unscathed.

It’s embarrassing. To recall such agonies, I find my life cliché.

Morbidity’s been done to death. There are enough *Bell Jars* in this *Prozac Nation* to send every shrink to the Caribbean twice. One in ten Americans takes an anti-depressant (according to the *New York Times*—they’re a trustworthy publication, right?), and the older we get, the more likely we are to take one. As for bullying and self-harm: browse through your time-sucking social media, and you’ll see it.

Unless you’ve boycotted public schools and technology since you were four (in which case, I’m impressed), you know what I’m talking about. You could have been the observer, the victim, the perpetrator. No matter what, you’ve seen evidence of humanity’s darker nature. The itch to destroy is within all of us, sated only by the urge to create. Some take that angst out on themselves, others on the weak.

Either way, those pains are close to us all—closer than most would admit.

There’s nothing new I could add to the subject.

The difficulty I find in writing about my past is rooted in a fear of unoriginality, and has fuckall to do with personal trauma. I’m far enough away from the pain to look back with that clear, bitter detachment of retrospect. Detachment can offer understanding, but only as far as observation can take you. To really learn from something, you have to be willing to feel it all over again.

I can’t afford to slip back into that hospital gown.

I’m “healthy” now—as “healthy” as a human brain can be. If anything, I’m happier than most. Being forced to two-step with your inner nasties can have a positive influence on your mental development—and a real bolster for your emotional IQ. If you passed me on the street, you’d only see life in this strange, blithe face. Suicide is the last thing you’d think of.

That’s what makes me worry.

There will always be new kids discovering the scene. Somewhere right now, an angry, pimply adolescent is banging his (or her) head to The Pistols, The Dead Kennedys, The Clash, riding that musical ecstasy for the first time. They’re hiding in the tunes, dreading the school days to come. They’re hiding razor cuts under black sleeves and spiked cuffs.

How can I help them in the present when I can’t accept my past?

The girl who stuffed those pills down her esophagus is a stranger, compartmentalized into a character. I could write her, but I can’t live her.

Won’t I, in turn, reduce these new, sad kids to statistics?

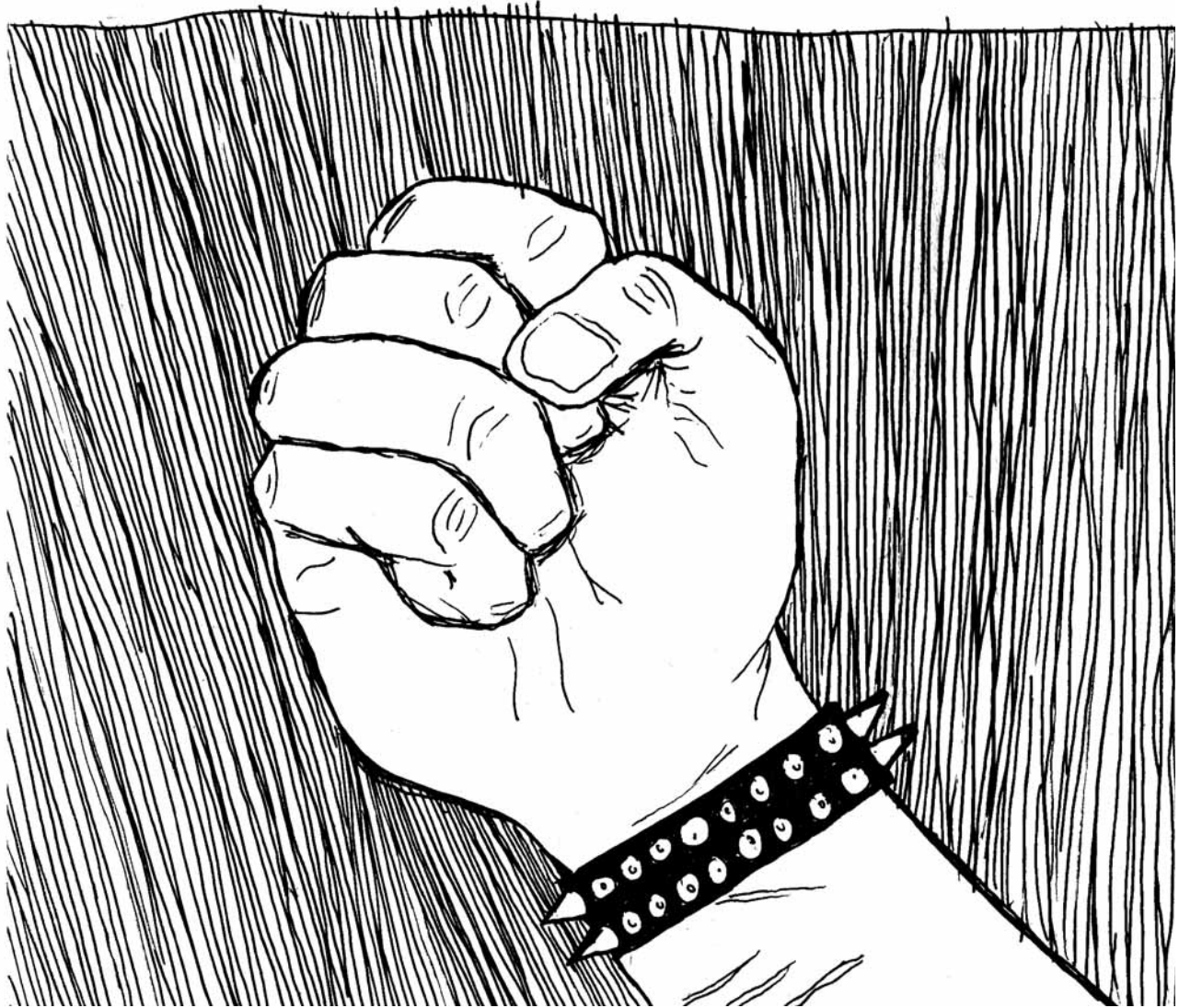
Healing’s the worst thing that happened to my empathy. The story is so old to me; I find it difficult to accept that some are experiencing its epiphanies and ordeals for the first time. I avoid all psychological explanation, thinking such blather redundant or obvious. Worst of all, I’ve become impatient. Staring at some poor, sobbing soul reminds me too much of who I once was, and for all my personal improvement, that reflection irks and paralyzes.

When I started “getting better,” I withdrew from my group therapy, estranging myself from folks I once thought of as friends. The gap increased to the point where I couldn’t be in the same room as someone having a meltdown. It’s silly. Am I scared the big black dog humping their head is gonna turn its jowls on me? Do I think sadness is an airborne infection?

Perhaps I doubt how stable my stability really is. Happiness—as with any emotion—is finite.

Depression has its peaks and valleys; so does positivity. When one rears its head, the other pulls back. It’s a natural course the human brain must take, so long as the ratio remains balanced.





CASSIE J. SNEIDER

# How can I help them in the present when I can't accept my past?

When you've faced sadness to such an extremity (from psych wards to scars to prescription pads), the mark stays with you, like the echoes of all the times people called you a "loser."

I worry that no matter how many times—or how many ways—my life will change for the better, people will stare me down and see the "freak."

There's glory in being a misfit, but there's also fear and loneliness, an agony locked outside healthy social experience. That's why we seek one another so desperately. When we find a kindred soul, we hold tight and pray our fingers stick.

So what do you do when the feelings that first bonded you to other "losers" goes

away or gets better? What happens when the depressive gets gleeful or the "freak" makes friends?

What if *you're* in a slump? How can I help you out here in Happyland?

I can't toss a rope; I can only encourage you to rise from the pit. *You're* the one who has to climb out, and I hate having to leave you all alone.

If you asked me how I escaped my own black hole, I'd be at a loss. I can only see who I was and who I've become. The most vital stage—the metamorphosis—is a blur.

Healing is a mystery. No one can teach us how. They can point us in the right direction, but we walk that brutal road alone. (Like life, like everything.)

Scars should be a source of pride. Vulnerability is beauty and sensitivity is strength.

Even though I know it gets better (I'm living proof!), writing that down and doing nothing else isn't going to help. I can't get as close as I'd need to in order to make a real, positive change in a stranger's life.

Writers know little of reality, but I know this: I can't be here for you in the way I'd like.

Sorry.

—Caitlin Hoffman



HAZOPRCAKE 27



**"That's before some girl tore my hair out in the front and it never grew back."**

# Nardwuar vs. The Sonics

## The Human Serviette Part I

The Sonics unleashed a monster two-headed single *The Witch/Psycho* in 1964, which stands as one of the greatest, if not the greatest recording of the punk variety ever documented. If you don't believe that, you will after listening to it! The Sonics hail from Tacoma, Washington. Although well known in the Pacific Northwest during the '60s, in the years since their break up in 1967 there was scant information on what The Sonics were up to. They were like ghosts. Legends blowing in the wind. This was remedied with their reformation in 2007 and they began doing interviews again. It took a while, but after six years of trying, I finally was able to ask The Sonics questions I had fantasized about for decades when they made an appearance at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, BC, Canada!

Transcription by Matthew Hart

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Rob Lind:** I'm Rob.

**Nardwuar:** From?

**Rob:** Charlotte, N.C. and I play the saxophone.

**Nardwuar:** Of the...?

**Rob:** Of the Sonics.

**Nardwuar:** Of the Sonics! And, Rob, who else is in the Sonics?

**Rob:** On my immediate right, my best friend and bass player and lead singer, Freddie Dennis.

**Freddie:** I'm from Seattle, Washington.

**Nardwuar:** And beside Freddie we have?

**Rob:** Besides Freddie we have Larry Parypa, one of the original Sonics. Lead guitar player from Bellevue, Washington in the high-rent district.

**Larry:** Wellevue, we call it. Wellevue.

**Nardwuar:** And beside Larry we have?

**Rob:** Beside Larry we have my grandfather. [laughs] No, beside Larry we have Gerry Roslie, the white Little Richard, the original singer, keyboard player for the Sonics and he lives in Tacoma, Washington.

**Nardwuar:** Hello Gerry!

**Gerry:** Hello.

**Nardwuar:** And beside Gerry we have?

**Rob:** Beside Gerry we have our newest acquisition, Dusty Watson, our drummer. Fantastic guy. Long travel guy. He's from Los Angeles, California.

**Nardwuar:** Hello Dusty!

**Dusty:** Hey, nice to meet you.

**Nardwuar:** Welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada!

**Dusty:** Thank you.

**Nardwuar:** The Sonics are in the house!

**Rob:** In the house, yes we are!

**Nardwuar:** I heard there were like these Halloween pumpkin outfits you have. [Nardwuar hands The Sonics a record]

**Larry:** We bought them here! They're orange. We bought them here and we bought some Beau Brummell coats here also.

**Nardwuar:** Can you please explain? You can't really see it. What's going on here in this record? The Sonics *Unreleased*?

**Rob:** The orange suits, we called those our pumpkin suits. Like Larry said, they were made by a tailor here in Vancouver. We only used them for shows. Like, we'd open for the Beach Boys or open for Jan And Dean. We used those for shows. They were real...loud.

**Nardwuar:** So, you're kind of happy you can't see them?

**Larry:** [Pointing to the record label on the back of the record] This guy, he's a crook. The guy who put this out is a crook. Never paid a royalty to anybody in his life and he laughs about it.

**Nardwuar:** So, I'm bringing back bad memories? The pumpkin outfits and this.

**Larry:** It's just a fact. You don't want this.

**Nardwuar:** There are some amazing photos and you mentioned her name earlier, Jini Dellaccio. Can you tell me about these pics? [Nardwuar hands them a copy of the recently reissued "The Witch" 7" that includes full color Jini Dellaccio pics]

**Larry:** She's ninety-six years old and she's still doing this.

**Nardwuar:** And there's a documentary about her called *Her Aim Is True*.

**Larry:** Right, wow! Look at that! [points to his head in the picture] That's before some girl tore my hair out in the front and it never grew back. Right there, that's it! Otherwise, I'd have bangs still.

**Rob:** That's true.

**Nardwuar:** What gig was it ripped out at? Do you remember?

**Larry:** Yeah, at the Coliseum in Portland.

**Nardwuar:** Because you said you were British?

**Larry:** Tell 'em Gerry! Tell 'em it's true!

**Freddie:** That's why his hair is all gone up here.

**Gerry:** And, also, he said one of them girls grabbed his hand and went *glumph!* ...on her hooter. [laughs]

**Dusty:** Her hooter?

**Gerry:** What you call 'em down in California? Scratch the hooter... [laughs]

**Larry:** Can you imagine what I'd look like had that not happened?

**Rob:** Yeah!

**Nardwuar:** So, there we have, again, the amazing Jini Dellaccio pic right there, of you pre-getting-hair-ripped-out. Where did you end up in the rafters? Like you were in the rafters at some gig?

**Rob:** Which night?! [laughs] I did that a lot.

**Larry:** Wenatchee! Who's the lead singer to Paul Revere And The Raiders?

**Nardwuar:** Mark Lindsay?

**Larry:** He used to do that. He'd climb the rafter, ya know, and hang. So, we played in Wenatchee the night that Rob did that.

**Freddie:** Now Eddie Vedder is doing it.

**Rob:** And I was real successful doing it except the one time I got up in the rafters and I couldn't get down. [laughs]

**Larry:** And we got off the stage and left you up there. [laughs]

**Gerry:** Turned off the lights. Shut the door.

**Rob:** And the rafters were full of horrible dirt and cobwebs and pigeon poo-poo. I was up there going, "Guys! Guys!"

**Nardwuar:** Did you have the mic with you? Have many songs did you sing in The Sonics?

**Rob:** In those days I probably sang fifteen or something, because there was just Gerry and me. We used to do three sets. So, I would do the blues and the Rolling Stones songs to give Gerry a break. So, yeah, I didn't sing as many as he did, but our three sets, doing sixty songs, I might have done fifteen. Something like that.

**Nardwuar:** You introduced me to Frank Zappa!

**Gerry:** [pause] What were we smoking? [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** In fact, I was so excited. I actually interviewed Jerry Dennon, and when I interviewed him I said, "Question, Jerry Dennon, was Gerry Roslie a big



MITCH CLEM | WATERCOLOR BY NATION OF AMANDA

# The guy who put this out is a crook.

## Never paid a royalty to anybody in his life and he laughs about it.

Zappa fan?" And Jerry Dennon said... "Absolutely!" So, I guess I'd like to find out, were you a big Zappa fan? How did you find that song, Gerry?

**Gerry:** What song?

**Nardwuar:** "Anyway the Witch Blows."

**Gerry:** Oh, "Anyway the Witch Blows?" [laughs] Yeah, it was off Frank Zappa. (The song is "Any Way the Wind Blows.")

**Nardwuar:** So, you're to blame for that one too?

**Rob:** Well, it was actually a pretty nice song. It was our attempt to commercialize or something, but it was a nice song. It was well done.

**Nardwuar:** It was the first Zappa thing I ever heard, so thank you! I really appreciate that.

**Rob:** Yeah, sure!

**Nardwuar:** However, Phil Spector emailed you guys? Is that true?

**Rob:** Yeah, we just got a one line email from him that said, "I always wanted to record you guys." I think that was from where he was incarcerated. So, maybe he wasn't himself. [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** "The Witch," actually was—believe it or not—in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, a number two hit! It was a number two hit!

**Rob:** Well, it was a number two down in Seattle and Tacoma also.

**Nardwuar:** We had "Psycho" go to number five.

**Rob:** Well, we didn't find out for thirty-five years that "The Witch" actually was number one, but the big rock station in Seattle, KJR, wouldn't do that. They actually put Petula Clark's "Downtown" as number one and "The Witch" as number two. It turned out we were number one by a long shot, but the local disc jockeys wouldn't play it during the day. They didn't want to scare the housewives and so they only played it during high school hours, from four to six, something like that. They couldn't make it number one. The program director, thirty-five years later, said, "Well, yeah. Actually, "The Witch" really was number one. We just couldn't do it." None of us understood what the big deal was, because if you listen to the lyrics in "The Witch" there's nothing nasty. There's nothing suggestive. It's fine. It's just words, but they thought we were summoning up demons from hell or something. I don't know what they thought.

**Nardwuar:** Here we are in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with the...

**Sonics all together:** Sonics!

**Nardwuar:** Now I first got into the Sonics because I walked into a record store in Vancouver, Zulu Records, and I said, "I would like hear 'Louie Louie,'" because I had heard that there was this great song called "Louie

Louie." And the girl behind the counter said you have to check out the...

**Sonics all together:** Sonics!

**Nardwuar:** The Sonics version! And I was forever changed. Now, I would like to ask you, Sonics, what would have happened if I asked the girl behind the counter, and I ended up getting this particular recording, right here. [Nardwuar hands The Sonics a record] "Louie Louie" by Little Bill And The Blue Notes.

**Larry:** Oh yeah, that's probably the first version, from the Northwest anyway.

**Nardwuar:** So, I got your version, I didn't get the "Louie Louie" Little Bill version. Would I have been changed if I'd have heard that?

**Larry:** Not as much as hearing ours. Ours is much more menacing. This was calypso. Then the Wailers came out with their version that was probably the most heavily copied, which was great.

**Nardwuar:** When was the first time The Sonics encountered Jimi Hendrix?

**Larry:** Spanish Castle. He wanted to sit-in. He had his own equipment, too. We said, "Get the hell out of here!"

Part II continues in *Razorcake* #80

Hop to [nardwuar.com](http://nardwuar.com)

to hear the unedited interview.



# WE WERE THERE

## Voices from L.A. Punk's First Wave

### An Oral History Hosted by Alice Bag

Article tended by Kari Hamanaka,  
Yvonne Drazan, and Candice Tobin

Layout by Todd Taylor

**M**Y NAME IS ALICIA VELASQUEZ, but I'm better known as Alice Bag. I grew up in East L.A., the daughter of Mexican immigrants. In the late 1970s, I was the lead singer of a band called The Bags, one of the first wave of Hollywood bands alongside such groups as The Screamers, The Weirdos, the Zeros, and the Germs. We all performed at a basement in Hollywood called the Masque, a club started and run by a Scottish immigrant named Brendan Mullen. The Masque scene was very short-lived. It was open just about a year or so before the Los Angeles County Fire Marshal shut it down permanently, but it made a huge impact during that time, functioning as an incubator for the nascent punk scene. It was a subterranean basement where being different was not only welcomed but celebrated, a place where creativity, art, and music flourished and found support outside of the mainstream.

The 1970s Hollywood punk scene was a space where I could be with other, like-minded individuals who also felt disenfranchised or alienated by the communities where we had grown up: our schools, our families, our neighborhoods. I wanted to join a Chicano student organization when I was in high school, hoping to find solidarity with others who were motivated to make positive change. I ended up not joining after I perceived being judged unfavorably based on my weird appearance, so I know what it's like to be the recipient of negative bias.

As I write this, I want to state that it is not my intention to deny or diminish those deeply personal experiences of perceived bias, spoken or unspoken. I simply want to add my voice and the voices of others who were present in the early years of the Los Angeles punk scene in hopes of providing a more balanced narrative and a counterpoint to what is in danger of becoming "the official story."

A few years ago, three University of Washington professors curated a museum exhibition called American Sabor, which aimed to show the influence of Latinos in U.S. popular music. I was lucky enough to get a personal tour from one of the curators during the first installation at Seattle's Experience Music Project

Museum. The show was well received and it was picked up by the Smithsonian as a traveling exhibition in 2012. I took my friends and family to see it when it got to the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, AZ. Now, a smaller version of the exhibit is at Cal State L.A. I was happy to attend the opening reception and thrilled to experience the show at my old alma mater (I got my Bachelor's degree and my teaching credential at Cal State L.A.) I planned to tweet links to help spread the word. But, I noticed when I chanced upon the Smithsonian's webpage for American Sabor that some of the information was wrong and misleading.

For example, the Hollywood punk scene predated the East L.A. punk scene; they were not concurrent as stated on the Smithsonian website. They were separated by a period of roughly two years. The Brat was never an all-female group. The assertion that Westside venues would not allow Eastside punks to play in the early days is also inaccurate. There were many Mexican Americans from the Eastside and other places and cities who were integral members of the Hollywood punk scene (myself included). We played at a variety of venues on the Westside.

I spoke to one of the original curators who told me that her text had been changed by the Smithsonian. She asked me to write a letter to them, but I didn't feel a letter was enough. I felt compelled to do something more, so I approached Razorcake about letting me research and write this piece in response to those inaccuracies.

Most disturbing to me was the implication that the early punk scene was inhospitable to people of color, specifically Latinos. The scene I experienced felt pretty egalitarian, but I wanted to engage my peers in the conversation, so I decided to interview some members of that early Hollywood punk scene to get their impressions and tell another side of the story that's been so often left out in order to perpetuate a dramatic storyline that never really existed—or perhaps existed for only a handful of people. What follows are those conversations. We were there and we can tell you first-hand how we were treated and how we treated others. I asked for concrete, specific first-person accounts only, and that's what you're getting.

**The Hollywood punk scene  
predated the East L.A. punk scene;  
they were not concurrent.**



Alice Bag | Dreva-Gronk Art Meets Punk show, 1978 | photo by Louis Jacinto



## Hollywood Punks Presente!

For the sake of brevity, I've listed the participants' OG punk affiliations alongside their self-designated ethnic identities rather than give a lengthy list of their subsequent achievements.

Moderator, **Alicia Velasquez**: AKA Alice Bag, Chicana, The Bags

**Tito Larriva**: Mexican, The Plugz

**Trudie Arguelles**: Hispanic, The Plungers

**Robert Lopez**: Mexican American, The Zeros

**Margot Olavarria**: Latin@, The Go-Gos

**Sean Carrillo**: Mexican, artist

**Juan Gomez**: Cuban, Human Hands

**Margaret Guzman**: Chicana, artist

**Seal Sanchez**: Hispanic, roadie

**Hector Peñalosa**: Mexican American, The Zeros

**Javier Escovedo**: Mexican American, The Zeros

**Kid Congo Powers**: Mexican American, Gun Club/The Cramps

**X-8**: Mexican/Spanish/Native American, *FlipSide* writer

**Hellin Killer**: Argentinian, Plungers

**Mike Ochoa**: Mexican American, Nervous Gender

## L.A. Punk's First Wave: Punk as Its Own Race

**Alice**: Did you ever personally experience racism from other punks, bands, club owners, magazine writers, or record promoters involved in the early punk scene?

**Tito**: I don't recall ever being discriminated against at all by anyone involved in the early punk scene. I believe that the punk scene was about the freedom of ideas and in order to have that, you had to remove any preconceived stereotypes. That was what made it exciting; you were included because you wanted to express yourself, not because you were Mexican, Black, a woman, Jewish, gay, whatever. That was the whole point, I thought.

**Trudie**: The scene actually broke down the walls of racism. If you wanted to be in our scene, you were accepted no matter who you were—after a certain hazing period.

**X-8**: It was a lot of young kids coming together for a variety of reasons, but most importantly it was about the music and having fun.

**Margot**: Without denying that racism is institutionalized in the broader U.S. culture, I can't say that I experienced racism from folks involved in the early punk scene, in L.A. or elsewhere. Back then, I identified first as a punk rocker—that being the source of discrimination I experienced outside our Hollywood counterculture, be it from law enforcement, academia, work environments, etc. Secondly, being in an all-woman band—following the punk ethos that anyone could pick up an instrument and play—I identified as a woman musician. I sometimes experienced prejudice from the male-dominated music business, especially as my former band, The Go-Go's started to become more commercially successful. I don't recall strongly identifying as Latin@ within the punk scene back then, because I was not prejudiced against on that basis.

**Alice**: Yeah, I agree with you. When you feel like there's nothing to push back against because you're being treated like everyone else, you have no need to differentiate yourself. In those days, I didn't think of myself as a female, Chicana, bisexual musician because within the punk scene I felt like we all just interacted as creative individuals. It was only on the outside that those things could make you the subject of stereotypes or discrimination.

**Hellin**: Girls and guys were equals for the first time ever in the music scene!

**Alice**: Within the punk scene nobody would bat an eye at female musicians, but out in the mainstream people still made sexist comments.

**Hellin**: Now, I did feel discriminated against by the general population of average people.

**Alice**: I think that's one of the things that strengthened our bonds and made us feel like a family.

**Sean**: One of the first "aha" moments for me had to do with you,

Alice. I remember perusing one of the magazines and there was an example of a real "punk" wearing a big crinoline undergarment as a skirt and leaning back on the hood of a car. It identified the young lady as "Alice Bag," but as I stared more closely at the image I realized it was my old classmate from French class, Alice Armendariz.

**Alice**: I remember French class with you! I think one of the things that threw people off was that so many of us had punk names that didn't overtly display our ethnicity so we were forcing people to view us primarily as punks. I was Alice Bag. Margo was Margo Go-Go. I recently saw Dave Drive (from the Gears) at a concert in my neighborhood and was surprised when he told me he was Latino because you know "Drive" doesn't sound Mexican [laughing].

**Sean**: Right! At that moment I realized that this music, this movement, this time in history was ours and we would be a part of it. After that it was an avalanche. I remember hearing the Plugz on Rodney (Rodney on the Roq, KROQ) and then seeing them live the first time. With surnames like Larriva and Quintana, it was not difficult to detect their ethnic identity. But the best part of all was the part that I feel most difficult to describe. It wasn't that their last names were Spanish that was significant. It was that their art, their music, their creative output was also a part of a larger musical movement. In other words, this was not "Chicano" music. It was "punk." That meant "we" were punk and nothing and no one could ever make us feel as if we were not an integral and important part of this burgeoning movement that I knew would live much longer than us and in fact burned brightly and quickly when it did.

**Alice**: For many of us, the strongest part of our identity during that time was being outside the mainstream, being punk.

**Juan**: Really, it was like "Who gives a fuck?" We were interested in the moment. Nobody thought about identity that much except for our punk identity, which was all-embracing. I felt embraced for who I was.

**Hector**: I never experienced any racism from any other people in the punk scene whatsoever. The punk scene was made up of a bunch of society's misfits, regardless of race. What brought everyone together was *not* accepting society's norms, and that included racism.

**Margot**: The early punk scene in California was a close-knit, inclusive community. We took care of each other for the most part, sharing food, putting people up, and helping others with survival regardless of ethnicity or gender. Although punk in the U.S. and U.K. was predominantly white, the L.A. scene had many racially-inclusive bands, especially in terms of Latinos. Some of the racially mixed bands back then were: The Zeros, Plugz, Nervous Gender, The Bags, Germs, The Dickies, Eyes, Alleycats, The Controllers (after adding drummer Mad Dog), and later Los Lobos, Kid Congo joining The Cramps, and others.

**Kid**: I never felt any racism in the first wave of punk. It was an open field for everyone, all races, women, gays, and men! I do know that the idea of labeling was taboo, so there was not politicizing of anyone's roles. As a matter of fact, there was no talk of it. Same with the gays involved, we knew who was fucking whom, but there was never discussion—besides occasional gossip—about it. There were too many Chicanos involved to ever feel racism from within the scene. The Plugz, The Zeros, The Bags all were Chicano led bands that were extremely popular. We were seeing ourselves as if from a truly alternative perspective. We were something not constrained by labels.

**Margaret**: I didn't experience racism directly, though there did seem to be a bit of underlying hostility or non-acceptance from a few individuals.

**Alice**: Like what? How did the non-acceptance display itself?

**Margaret**: It wasn't out in the open. Once I remember Philomena, from *Slash* (Magazine) was talking to me and she told me I looked Spanish, when another girl who was in the room added, "She doesn't look Spanish. She looks stone-cold Indian." The non-acceptance was in her tone of voice.

**Alice**: How did you react?

**Margaret**: It caught me off guard. I just let it go, probably walked away.

**Alice**: Did you tell her how you felt?

**Margaret**: No, but I get that, even from my own people. It has to do with skin color.

**Alice**: You know, I would take "stone-cold Indian" as a compliment.





Nervous Gender, Gerardo Velasquez | Club 88, 1979 | photo by Louis Jacinto



**This was not “Chicano” music. It was “punk.” That meant “we” were punk and nothing and no one could ever make us feel as if we were not an integral and important part of this burgeoning movement.** -Sean Carillo

**Margaret:** Well, it wasn't meant that way!

**Alice:** Yeah, I get it. I wish I'd known you better in those days so we could have called the girl out on her bullshit together! I always felt like I could speak my mind and I felt respected in that scene, so I'm sorry you had to go through that alone.

**Trudie:** I never experienced racism, because I don't look ethnic. I am very white. Although, once I did experience whitey hate...

**Alice:** That's racism, too!

**Trudie:** But that was not in the scene; it was much earlier.

**Alice:** It was rare in the Hollywood scene.

## Good, Mean-Spirited Fun

**Trudie:** Remember the Plunger Hate List? We put any insult we could think of to fit each person. Not that I'm proud of it, but I can't pretend I was a goody-goody. [Laughs]

**Alice:** What is this, confession time? You had a slam book. We made one of those in Cholita years later. It was good, mean-spirited fun! [Laughing]

**Trudie:** At the same time, we had no prejudice at all! [Laughing] It's hard to explain, but I think you know what I mean. We liked to spout obnoxiousness to get a reaction, to instigate chaos! We were kind of like belligerent drunks—actually most of us *were* belligerent drunks.

**Alice:** I was a belligerent drunk a lot of the time and I said and did my share of distasteful and insensitive things, but I always felt like all those punks were my family. I will be the first to admit that I sometimes did pick fights for sport. They never had anything to do with race, but that's a whole other story.

I think it's important to note that nobody was denying their ethnicity and we did speak about each other's backgrounds. We sometimes even joked about it. My rhythm guitarist, and later roommate, Craig Lee was Jewish and he and I often made cracks about each other's heritage, but we laughed about it. It was funny because we knew, trusted, and respected each other.

I once went to a dinner party where a man I had just met made a joke about some dolls that were popular at the time. He called them Beaner Babies instead of Beanie Babies. I stared a hole through his head and the whole dinner party struggled to recover even after the guy apologized to me. There was no trust in that situation and I didn't want to give him permission to continue to joke along those lines. So, yeah, I know what you mean Trudie. We trusted each other, so we could tease each other and laugh about it.

The Masque was one of those places where sacred cows and political correctness were definitely not in fashion. You couldn't take yourself too seriously in the early days because punk was rooted in irreverence. If you did take yourself seriously, either by posing as a more adept musician, someone who had industry connections, or any other claims to political or artistic importance, then you might not be welcome.

**Hellin:** To the best of my knowledge, anyone and everyone was welcome at the Masque!

**Hector:** Anybody with an electric guitar, drums, bass guitar, singing or non-singing voice was pretty much accepted in the punk scene. The philosophy of the punks was DIY. It didn't matter if you played the guitar like Jimi Hendrix or Jimmy Page. On the contrary, just making something happen regardless of musical technique was the objective. *Assholes* were not welcome: (nazi) skinheads, narcissists with delusional rockstar syndrome, and a few others.

**Trudie:** All sorts were welcomed, as long as they showed that they were loyal to the cause, usually by cutting their hair off. [laughs]

**X-8:** Everyone was welcome as long as you were different from the boring, mainstream music and people at the time—disco and Fleetwood Mac stuff.

**Kid:** The only requirement in my eyes was that you had to be bucking the system twenty-four hours a day.

**Margot:** In 1977-8, the scene welcomed punk bands in general and by 1979, you began to see more diversity in genres: surf punk, death punk, goths, art bands, cerebral bands, folk punk, romantics, rockabilly, while some bands chose to evolve into pop or new wave. Those not welcome into the early scene were hippies, posers, spoiled rich kids, old rockers—back then that was people over thirty who did not appreciate our aesthetic or music—but

certainly not on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, or gender. When a few punks started to wear swastikas, there was a backlash, best expressed by Jewish lesbian folk punk singer Phranc's "Take off Your Swastikas."

**Alice:** That was the cool thing about it. We took responsibility for our scene. Shannon Wilhelm, my roommate, and I made stenciled shirts that read "Die Nazi Scum" especially for the neo-nazis who started to come around. We harassed them until they took off their swastikas. The Masque and the Canterbury were like our homes and we may have been slob, but we cleaned house on that occasion.

**Seal:** It was a very accepting scene. All kinds of people were welcome. Scrawny, pimple-faced misfits in bad fashion... no matter what you looked like, you could be cool. Even if you sounded bad and couldn't play an instrument you could be accepted. Or, you could be a roadie! It seemed that everyone had ideas. Conversations happened. Fast friendships were formed.

**Alice:** Yeah, unlikely friendships that cut across all kinds of imaginary boundaries. People came from all over the place to be part of the burgeoning punk scene.

**Mike:** The scene was very small and everyone would tell each other what bands were coming up. If you went to more than a couple shows, people would begin to recognize you and start talking to you. It made me feel included. It was a way of keeping this scene growing. People had to talk to each other to make sure the bands were being supported—social networking before cell phones.

We were Nervous Gender—a band made up of two gay Mexicans, a gay Irish guy, and a Jewish lesbian. I do not remember any band that was not welcome.

**Alice:** You would fit in at the Masque, if you were going to fit in anywhere! I know some people feel most at home in the place where they grew up but for those of us who were too different from those around us, that just wasn't true. Back in 1976/77, I sometimes had my bands practice in my parents' living room in East L.A. When we walked around outside in the neighborhood, people would look at us like the circus was in town! I was a freak in my own backyard! I think people reacted negatively not only to the way we dressed, but also to the music we were playing.

**X-8:** People thought we were crazy to like bands like the Ramones and the Germs. We used to argue with people in high school, who were into Genesis and Led Zeppelin. There was a faction of kids who thought they were cooler because they liked The Cars [laughs]. Whittier was a very boring town. Although, as you know, it had great thrift stores. Nixon came from there and it was very conservative. We went to Hollywood to get away from that.

**Mike:** Growing up, I felt like an outsider. I do not fit in the Latino community or gay culture. Many people I met at the punk shows also seemed alienated and disenfranchised from where they came from. The overall feeling I got was that the world did not want us, so we all came to Hollywood to find a safe place to be.

## Lands before Punk: Sexuality and Glitter

**Alice:** Ways of expression that are uncommon within your own ethnic group might lead to suspicion. Some of the stuff I was listening to was promoting ideas that challenged traditional values, especially in regards to sexuality and gender roles. I'm thinking of pre-punk bands like the New York Dolls, whose male members wore makeup and sometimes dressed in women's clothes.

**Seal:** I didn't realize I was different until the cholas targeted me for listening to The Runaways. That was where my life changed: punk rock and gay... I was ready to fight!

**Alice:** The people doing the policing were often operating within patriarchal paradigms, which were threatened by the gender-bending of bands like the New York Dolls and the androgyny of performers like David Bowie or Patti Smith.

**Robert:** I saw the New York Dolls at an all-ages club when I was fourteen years old. It was JJ's in San Diego, Saint Patrick's Day 1974. My parents drove me and my two sisters. I was front row center.

**Alice:** Did people in Chula Vista make fun of you or give you a hard time for liking the New York Dolls?

**Robert:** They didn't know!





Human Hands (l to r) Juan Gomez, Dennis Duck, David Wiley, Rick Potts, Bill Noland, circa 1980 | photo by Lynda Burdick

**What brought everyone together  
was not accepting society's norms,  
and that included racism.** -Hector Peñalosa





**Sean:** The Dolls seemed to reflect a new aesthetic; I wasn't sure what it was. I was far too young to understand it in a historical context and I certainly had never heard of anything like the Cockettes or Les Petite Bon Bons—though I soon would—but I did recognize an outsider when I saw one and the Dolls were like music for outsiders, the “new” outsiders.

**Robert:** The roots of punk is glitter.

**Seal:** I knew that I was gay and that's when I started to feel different, but gay and bi were beginning to be okay by then.

**Alice:** More widely accepted in some circles maybe.

**Seal:** My brother and sister were seriously into Bowie and I knew every one of Bowie's lyrics.

**Alice:** I was introduced to the idea of bisexuality from reading an interview with David Bowie. It immediately made me stop wondering what I was because I didn't have to choose between identifying as gay or straight, I could be bi and according to Bowie that was just fine.

**Juan:** Bowie just blew all the doors wide open. It did make me feel like things were getting better. The band that made me realize I was going to write songs was The Velvet Underground. I thought, if Lou Reed can do this, so can I [laughter]. No, not because he was a hack but because of his genius. He inspired me.

**Hector:** I went to elementary school in Tecate, Mexico and lived with my grandmother for a few years but I always felt like I was in the wrong place. I'm a kid of the pop culture of the times: rock and roll, TV shows like the Munsters, Batman, Green Hornet, Beatles, Saturday morning cartoons. I did embrace the entertainment world of Mexican pop culture: lucha libre and its protagonists like El Santo, Blue Demon, and a few others, also Los Polivoces (a Mexican comedy team.)

**Kid:** I grew up hearing rancheras in my house and although I didn't speak Spanish, I was drawn to the sounds of anger, revenge, or delight in their voices.

**Alice:** Rancheras are very emotional. I internalized some of that too.

**Kid:** In the Gun Club, Jeffrey Lee Pierce and I referenced neighborhood sounds of our San Gabriel Valley upbringing regularly: the mixture of oldies, R&B mixed with hard rock and psychedelic rock we heard coming out of garages as our neighborhood bands practiced. My sisters and cousins were very into Thee Midnitters and would go to dances to see them. I remember their excitement in getting ready. As a pre-teen I didn't know what Thee Midnitters did, but I knew they made my teenage family members very excited. That excitement influenced me.

**Juan:** People compared Human Hands to the Talking Heads, but I think it was the rhythms and danceability of Cuban music that had slipped into our music.

**Alice:** Sometimes we're not even aware of when or where our influences will surface.

**Sean:** Mexican culture definitely influenced my point of view as an artist. I grew up listening to Eydie Gorme and the Trio Los Panchos. It was like the soundtrack of my childhood.

**Alice:** Mine too—well, that and rancheras and Mexican pop, and soul. That Eydie Gorme and Los Panchos record is classic. Did that music influence your art?

**Sean:** When I did my first paper fashion show at Cal State L.A. in 1982 I was very specific about the music. The clothes were all new and shiny but I wanted the music to reflect something traditional, so instead of a disco beat like other fashion shows at the time, I chose traditional Mexican Mariachi music.

**Alice:** Sounds great!

**Sean:** Getting back to Eydie Gorme, I would like to point out that she was not Latina. Nonetheless, she sang beautifully and had tremendous command of the language. I thought it was wonderful. This is a very important point to me—if little Edith Gormezano, a Sephardic Jew from the Bronx could make an album of Mexican standards that sells millions of copies and gets played in Mexican homes all over the Southwest, we should not be limited to race-specific roles as regards our creative output no matter what our race. So the rules should apply to white as well as non-white races. I even hate saying non-white...

**Alice:** The rules should apply to everyone. Better yet, there shouldn't be any rules. I agree with you that artists should be free of race-specific expectations. Having said that, I want to add that I'm glad

Eydie decided to collaborate with Los Panchos because there's a big difference between a respectful cultural exchange of ideas and colonization of someone else's culture.

You know, I've said on a number of occasions that I'm bored when I see yet another all-male, all-white band because I find it much more interesting to watch a band that reflects the diversity of their community, instead of buying into the pre-fab, hair-gelled, cute boy band model. I want to see different ethnicities, different genders, different body types onstage. It affects the way I see the world to see diversity represented. It thrills me when artists challenge society in these unspoken ways. From where I stand, punk is about challenging the status quo, not reinforcing it. I don't want to knock the contributions of white males, I just want to see parity.

But since we were speaking of race-specific expectations, how did you feel about the nickname the Mexican Ramones?

**Javier:** I hated it.

**Alice:** Oh no, I'm sorry. I think I might have parroted that, thinking you were okay with the nickname, though when I really stop to think about it, I don't know why I would think that.

**Javier:** First of all, I don't think we sounded like the Ramones, we didn't look like the Ramones, and I wasn't Mexican. Mexican means you were born in Mexico, the people in Mexico called me Chicano. I feel like if we sang the Ramones' songs in Spanish you could call us that, but we didn't. Also calling us the Mexican Ramones seems to imply that what we did was not original.

**Alice:** It was!

**Javier:** It's as if we heard the Ramones and then started a band. We were in a band before we heard the Ramones. We were influenced by all the glitter bands and solo artists I mentioned earlier. At our first show in Rosarito we covered “Pipeline” because I heard the Dolls play it when I saw them in San Diego and we also covered “Waiting for the Man” by the Velvet Underground. So I would say that the Dolls and the Velvets were probably our two biggest influences. When we were called The Mexican Ramones, I didn't like it but I was happy we were getting written about at all and reviewed in the *L.A. Times* and other places so I took it in stride.

**Hector:** The story goes like this: *Slash* was interviewing The Screamers and Claude Bessy—may he rest in peace—asked Tomato Du Plenty what he thought of the Zeros and his response was... Ya sabes.

**Alice:** They're the Mexican Ramones?

**Hector:** And of course it got printed and circulated and suddenly it's “Hey, it's the Mexican Ramones!” I didn't like it but I had to accept it since it stuck like a barnacle on the Zeros boat.

**Alice:** How was that Rosarito show?

**Hector:** It was a quinceañera party for one of Javier's relatives! Here are four teenage boys in tight pants and pointy shoes/boots looking like we walked out of a time machine circa 1966. The folks at the party stared at us like we had just landed from Mars.

**Alice:** [laughs] I can picture it.

**Hector:** Seriously, I felt the vibe. We played six tunes and got out of there fast! We had to borrow the musical equipment from a top 40 band in Tijuana and they were older musicians who were not happy about us using their stuff because we didn't fit in. Is that punk? I think it is!

**Alice:** Totally punk! You ran all the way to Hollywood!

## Hollywood: The Birthplace of Southern California Punk

**Hector:** Being the bass player in The Zeros and residing in San Diego, California, we had to drive to Hollywood in order to play live because back then, San Diego had nothing to offer a band like The Zeros. The first time we played in Hollywood was April 1976.

**Javier:** There really was not a scene in San Diego. We tried to play a few places but they wanted cover bands mostly. There was nowhere to play, and I mean nowhere. It took San Diego forever to get a scene going.

**Alice:** Neither San Diego, nor Whittier, nor East L.A. was a viable alternative for us yet.

**X-8:** My first show was The Quick at the Whiskey in 1976. There wasn't a punk scene at the time, but we used to listen to Rodney on The Roq and hear about what was going on in Hollywood. We used to take the bus from Whittier and go to Hollywood and see flyers of upcoming concerts. That's where we heard about the Germs and





The Zeros and Trudie, December, 1977 | photos by Dawn Wirth



**If you wanted  
to be in our  
scene, you  
were accepted  
no matter who  
you were—  
after a certain  
hazing period.**

-Trudie



Gina Schock and Margot Olavarria of the Go-Go's | Starwood, 1979  
photo by Louis Jacinto

Weirdos. It eventually inspired us to do a fanzine (*FlipSide*) in the summer of 1977. We printed the first couple of issues at the Whittier Library.

I felt that we (*FlipSide*) were accepted because we were giving the bands (and local celebrities) some publicity. But I think we would have been accepted anyway because we weren't typical suburban kids. I lived at a fleabag hotel in Whittier.

**Mike:** It was early 1977. I had seen the Sex Pistols on TV. The next day I went to a record store in Long Beach and picked up the singles, "Anarchy in the UK" and "God Save the Queen." Soon, I was going to shows, starting with a show at the Whisky a Go Go. The show was The Dickies and The Bags. I later found out that you—Alice, the lead singer of the Bags—went to the same junior high school.

**Alice:** Robert Louis Stevenson Jr. High in the house! [laughs]

**Tito:** It must have been 76/77 and Janet and I lived at the Geza X house along with Charlotte Caffey, Joe Ramirez, Joe Nanini, and, of course, Geza. I distinctly remember Charlotte and Joe Ramirez coming home one day all excited about a new club opening up in Hollywood.

**Alice:** The Masque!

**Tito:** Yes! Within weeks we all had bands.

**Alice:** That's around the time that we were playing with Geza. We—The Bags—played our first gig there in the summer of 1977. The Masque had just gone from being a rehearsal studio to hosting live shows. It was an exciting time to be in Hollywood, so I moved there from East L.A. shortly after that gig. Hollywood and San Francisco were the two scenes that were happening at that time and I think many of us migrated from the suburbs to the city because we found acceptance there. It seemed that it was okay to be a weirdo in Hollywood. In fact, it was preferred.

**Margaret:** Platform shoes were traded in for spike heels for the girls and tennis shoes were traded in for black boots for the guys. If people showed up with long hair, they soon got punk hair. And clothes: second hand or thrift store or vintage was good. I remember seeing a sweet looking girl, kind of surfer-looking, and next time I saw her she had cut off and spiked up her long hair and was wearing a vintage dress, ripped stockings, black leather jacket, and leather work boots.

**Alice:** Yeah, there was an aesthetic, but it wasn't a uniform. I remember spray painting clothes to wear to Weirdos concerts and each outfit was an original.

**Margaret:** Alice, I don't think I ever saw you wearing the same thing twice. Remember the girl with the cigarette butts safety-pinned all over her pants?

**Alice:** I don't remember, but it sounds cool! [Laughs] Better than wearing something too mainstream, as far as we were concerned. So the scene was open, but I think you had to understand the punk aesthetic.

**Robert:** It was open. We didn't have the luxury to discriminate. Our numbers were too small, but we invited the world to discriminate against us. We wanted the others to hate us, but if we were hated it wasn't for our race. That seemed the farthest thing from the point. We wanted others to hate us for the music we listened to, the way we dressed, and the way that we thought.

**Alice:** Because it wasn't just about music or clothes. Like Hector said, it was about not blindly accepting society's norms. We challenged the status quo with everything at our disposal—race, class, gender—but we did it by just being ourselves. We were happily, if inadvertently, messing with the outside world's preconceived notions of what those things meant and that often pissed people off.

**Seal:** I never felt racism at all, or sexism or really any kind of bias. I mostly hung out with lots of dykes, but our social circles were a rainbow.

**Kid:** I fell in with gay musicians, performers, actors, actresses, photographers, and scenesters via The Screamers and their entourage who were performers from NYC Theater of the Ridiculous/La Mamma scene. People like Gorilla Rose, Styles Caldwell, Paul Ambrose, and of course, Tomata Du Plenty. Also Fayette Hauser from The Cockettes in San Francisco. These were the highly creative people of both and third, sexes, whom I was enamored with and they gladly acted as mentors. They really did help art direct the scene. I am positively sure of that. Certainly, I knew other musicians who were gay or figuring it out through punk. Like I said before, labels were taboo, so no one really discussed being gay. We were just tribespeople, perhaps in a sub genre. We were pretty invincible at that age with the force of the punk movement.

**Mike:** I had felt disenfranchised from both the place I grew up and the gay community. I did not need acceptance from the local East L.A. community. The people I met in the punk scene became an extended family. In many ways, gay people create surrogate families for their support in the same way the punk scene became my surrogate family. I call it the punk scene because the people I met were from all over the city, not just Hollywood. Hollywood was the only place bands could play, in the early days. The Hollywood scene included bands from across the city.

**Alice:** Yeah, in the early days kids came into Hollywood from the suburbs, but I think that sometime in late 1979 and early '80 the climate of punk in L.A. changed and punk spread out into the suburbs. By then, the idea of punk was popular enough that you didn't have to leave home to find fellowship in Hollywood; you could play in your own backyard.

**Kid:** By that time, I was starting my own band The Gun Club, with Jeffrey Lee Pierce, who was also Mexican American and we bonded greatly by the "otherness" of our ethnic background and growing up in our respective San Gabriel Valley suburbs of La Puente and El Monte. We were misfits that felt outside of our own backgrounds, but somehow drawn to it, if only by instinct, by blood—a crazy dichotomy I find many Los Angeles Chicanos feel. We didn't grow up speaking Spanish but we knew Spanish words, Mexican food, the importance of family, and customs well. I don't think our band felt racism, but when "hardcore" happened we had little interest in it. It even seemed silly to me. Guess I was already an old coot!

**Sean:** There was a critical turning point for me and it was when I really knew it was time for me to move on. In the beginning we used to pogo dance. It was fun and it was not violent. As silly as it may seem now, it was enormous fun. If someone fell down, the other dancers would make room for them and help them get back on their feet in order to continue dancing. I distinctly remember Black Randy falling on his ass repeatedly at the Elks Lodge and each and every time we helped him up. His pants were falling down too. It was rather comical, actually.

Later, the mosh pit was born and dancing was no longer fun. The "pogo" was replaced by slam dancing and I felt uncomfortable once more. It was like being back in high school and the bullies were back in charge. Punk had changed.

**Hellin:** I think the shows were very different in the '70s. It all seemed much more like family. Everyone stuck up for each other and gender or race were irrelevant! Maybe people were kinda judgmental about long hair but it was more in fun.

In the '80s, things got weird. More new kids were influenced by the news propaganda saying punk was violent and they started trying to act like the skinheads in England who were driven by their own racial tensions. Things were not as safe or fun.

**Seal:** In my experience, things did change in the early '80s. I think it was socioeconomic though. As punks, we hurt each other all the time—mostly on the dance floor! It was mostly good-natured roughhousing with friends, but occasionally there were real fights, knock-down brawls with outsiders who thought our rough fun was an invitation to beat people up. We cut each other, tattooed each other. We were rough and tough. But at some point, the jocks got wind of the scene and came at us thinking it was okay to go into the pit and hurt anyone randomly. I went to a show at the Cuckoo's Nest in Orange County. The Alleycats were playing with The Go-Go's. The local guys were beating the shit out of the punks who were regulars to the music. Somebody pushed my head into the stage and I got a huge lump on my forehead. I was in the bathroom checking it out and a girl came and told me who it was. They were *jocks*! Big, meat-headed dudes in letter jackets. So, a bunch of us dykes fought back! To my recollection, we won. The bouncers threw them out for fighting girls!

## You Can't Step in the Same Punk River Twice

**Alice:** As punk expanded, it definitely picked up regional flavors—both good and bad. In some scenes it turned into a white male thing that I couldn't get into. The Vex came along in 1979 and helped take the scene east of Chinatown where it had already taken hold in 1978. On March 12, 2012, the *L.A. Weekly* ran a piece by Nicholas Pell





Baba Chenelle and Karla Maddog, 1978



Seal | courtesy of Seal



Michael Ochoa and Louis Jacinto, 1978 | courtesy of Louis Jacinto



Middle Class and The Zeros

Top: Jeff Atta, Bruce Atta, Javier Escovedo, Mike Atta  
Bottom: Hector Peñalosa, Baba Chenelle, Mike Patton



**Scrawny, pimple-faced  
misfits in bad fashion... no  
matter what you looked  
like, you could be cool.**

Seal

X8, 1977 | photos by Pete Landswick

called "The Vex and Chicano Punk: a Very Brief History" for the *L.A. Weekly* that attempted to record the scene at the time, but only managed to paint an inaccurate picture that has continued to live on today. Pell at one point wrote in his article for the *Weekly*, "...once punk proper hit with all its safety pins and mohawks, L.A. was home to two rival punk scenes: One in Hollywood, another in East Los." I don't remember this rivalry at all.

**X-8:** There was no rivalry that I know of. I had already left the punk scene by 1979-80 because it became violent and it was no longer that fun. I never even made it to The Vex!

**Hector:** Keep in mind that a lot of these writers were still in grammar school when we were already doing our thing.

**Robert:** Did I know Nicholas Pell in 1976? Did you? Was he cute? Was he born yet?!

**Alice:** I don't think he was around then. I think his writing is based on investigative journalism [laughing]. I Googled him. He looks well groomed. You might think he's cute... He wears fedoras. His Twitter account says he tweets about egoism and masculinity among other things.

**Robert:** Well, I don't remember a rivalry.

**Mike:** It never occurred to me to wonder where a band was from. I only cared if I could enjoy what the band was trying to do. They did not have to be good musicians. They just had to try and express themselves.

The Vex was only four blocks away from where I live. The only time I saw any negativity was when I saw Nervous Gender there. I was not in the band at the time and I went to support them. There was some homophobia directed at the band.

**Tito:** I don't really remember any divide other than a geographical one. But then, as you know, I was a transplant, not an East L.A. native. I lived in Hollywood and considered myself a Holly Weirdo and as I remember it, the "Hollywood Punks" were well on their way by the time there was even an awareness that there was a viable punk thing happening on the East Side.

**Hector:** This bit about Hollywood and East L.A. not coming together, well, maybe into the '80s as more kids got into punk rock, but in the beginning EVERYTHING WAS HAPPENING IN HOLLYWOOD. There was no rivalry whatsoever.

**Sean:** This person is probably young and making claims in order to incite the masses.

**Tito:** It sounds like someone is trying to stir up some shit and make it look like there was more going on than truly was.

**Alice:** The problem is that this narrative is starting to take hold. The Smithsonian website for American Sabor has made similar claims saying that "Almost all the famous venues would not allow Eastside Chicano punks to play." I'm from East L.A. No one kept me out of anything.

**Robert:** It sounds like *West Side Story*.

**Alice:** Yes, it does and it wasn't like that at all. The Masque and the Vex scenes weren't even concurrent and we somehow had a rivalry? I think it's more complicated than that. Some of the punk bands that came along a little later felt that they were being discriminated against on the basis of race and somehow that got blamed on the Hollywood scene. Most of the people I know who were playing at the Vex didn't have those racist experiences, but some people did and I don't want to negate or make light of their experiences. The truth is that by late '79 things were already really different than they had been in the early years. The Hollywood scene was all but over by the time the Vex came along. So, I'd say that the rivalry is a myth, but allegations of racism in punk at large are possible. I mean, there were skinheads in those days. They weren't hanging in our circles, but they were out there calling themselves punks.

**Tito:** All that skinhead nazi racist image came much later after the media and film inflated that aspect of the imagery, which was really more for shock value.

**Alice:** Nicholas goes on to say, "The Vex provided a platform for bands like The Plugz, The Brat and The Zeros, who were known as the "Mexican Ramones" and featured a young El Vez."

**Robert:** I don't remember ever playing the Vex. I quit the Zeros in 1978.

**Alice:** The Zeros and the Plugz were both already established by 1979, having honed their chops as part of the Hollywood scene. We claim you, not out of rivalry but out of accuracy.

HAZORCAKE 40

**Robert:** By 1979 they (the Zeros without Robert) had moved to San Francisco.

**Hector:** I never heard of The Vex.

**Javier:** We never played there.

**Alice:** More myths...

**X-8:** *FlipSide* didn't care where you came from. For example, we liked The Zeros and admired the fact they drove almost two hours from the San Diego area. If they could come up to Hollywood, why not bands from East L.A. and Orange County?

**Alice:** In 1976-77, it was wide open. Tito, you were part of the Hollywood scene first but you later played a key role in the East L.A. scene as well.

**Tito:** I arrived in Hollywood in 1975 and was not aware of what I call "The East L.A. Syndrome."

**Alice:** When was this?

**Tito:** A little later. The East L.A. scene came later.

**Alice:** What did you experience in East L.A.?

**Tito:** In my naïveté after getting to know some of the few East L.A. punk bands, I noticed they didn't play in Hollywood much or at all. Inspired by these bands, I created a record company to exclusively produce, record, and release East L.A. bands. I didn't equate this with racism but more to a geographical problem. Knowing what I know now, I believe that many of the bands in East L.A. thought they were being ignored because of their race. I don't think that was true, but then, I wasn't from East L.A.

**Alice:** You can't step into the same punk river twice, our experiences were different because they happened at different times. There were a lot of punk bands by 1980, so it might have been more difficult for people to get noticed or even get gigs. Or, maybe there were some racist bookers out there and we were just fortunate to never have met them. Was your company Fatima Records?

**Tito:** Yeah, Fatima was late in '79. The first record was Gun Club's *Fire of Love*. We ran out of money and made a deal with Slash for that record then got Yolanda Combaran and Richard Duardo involved to do the Brat *Attitudes* EP (1980), then a few singles and other stuff.

**Alice:** Sounds like cooperation and support rather than rivalry. These situations are successful not because one group extends goodwill but because all parties are open to a creative exchange.

## Brendan Mullen's Ears Knew No Color

**Alice:** Many of the bands that played at The Vex played there by choice, not out of duress or for lack of other venues. On the topic of the Vex, several years ago, the Claremont Museum of Art presented an exhibit called "Vexing: Female Voices," which focused on the contributions of punk women from East L.A. I was invited to participate despite the fact that I told the curators that I was not part of the East L.A. punk scene but of the Hollywood scene. They encouraged me to participate because I was born and raised in E.L.A.

During the wave of promotion that preceded the opening of the show I was asked to interview with a writer named Augustin Gurza for the *L.A. Times*. The interviewer had been given a brief history of The Vex and was looking for quotes for his story. Because I have a very good friend who had told me of her own experiences with racism in the punk scene, I was trying to be sensitive and respectful of her experiences and I inadvertently played into a drama that I had no idea was about to unfold.

I told Mr. Gurza that the punk scene I had experienced had been open to all, but he asked if some people had felt it was closed as that narrative had been already been presented to him. I thought of my friend and I explained to him that in *later years*, yes, some people felt the L.A. punk scene was closed off to them. I was not talking about the early Hollywood scene or the Masque because I knew that scene had happened much earlier. I went on to express support for the fact that E.L.A. punks had created their own venue and that it had thrived despite the fact that some of those punks had initially felt excluded. The interview was lengthy, but the quotes extracted failed to capture my intent and the article would come back to bite me in the butt. (*LA Times*, May 10, 2008. "Museum Showcases Female Punk Scene.")

Soon after the interview came out I received an angry email from my good friend Brendan Mullen, the founder of the Masque, who





Above: Janet Carroll, Tito Larriva, and Brendan Mullen (background) at the new Masque | courtesy of Janet Carroll

Below: (l to r) Gerardo Velasquez and Michael Ochoa, Nervous Gender | courtesy of Alice Bag





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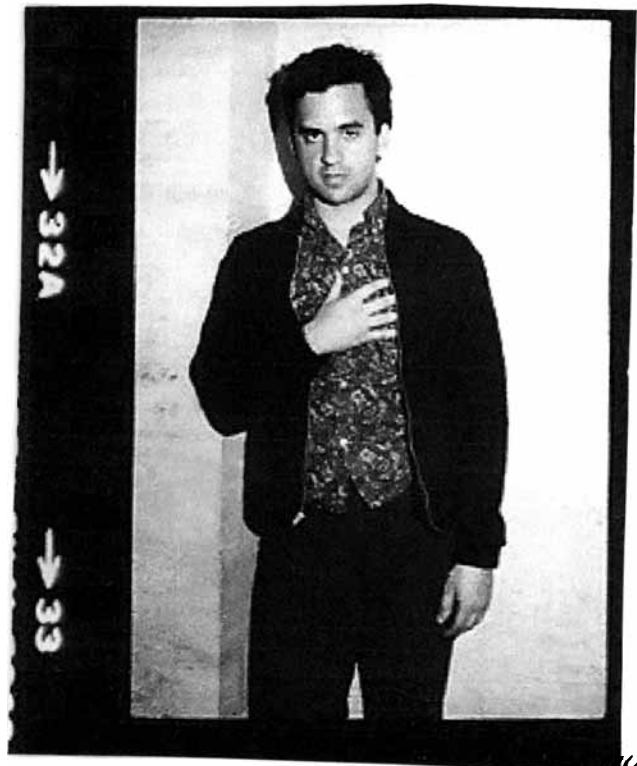
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Left: Juan Gomez  
Right: Seal | courtesy of Seal



**I never felt racism at all, or sexism or really any kind of bias. I mostly hung out with lots of dykes, but our social circles were a rainbow.** -Seal

accused me of selling out the Hollywood scene in order to be in line with the E.L.A. scene. I explained to him that I had done no such thing and after a flurry of emails back and forth we declared an uneasy truce. I felt bad that someone I considered a friend would accuse me of "playing the race card" for personal gain and I don't know if I handled the situation as well as I might have, had I not felt attacked. I knew that Brendan felt wounded by the implication that the punk scene had been anything but egalitarian and, despite the fact that his name had never come up and that I had told the reporter that my own experiences had been of an open and inclusive scene, those items were minimized in the article.

Shortly after that, Brendan passed away and I was left feeling as though the wound I unintentionally inflicted on him hadn't fully healed. I would love to be able to clear his reputation, so in case there's any doubt, I never experienced any prejudice from Brendan.

**Trudie:** Brendan could be a royal ass at times, but *never* prejudiced regarding race!

**Juan:** Brendan was such a warm and open person, he would never put up with racist bullshit!

**X-8:** Brendan was great. The one thing he confided in me was at goth club Bar Sinister many years later and told me he was a closet goth. We never talked about race.

**Margot:** I definitely don't think Brendan's booking was discriminatory in any way. We were rehearsing at the Masque back then. One night at the Whisky parking lot Darby Crash came up to me and said, "You guys are playing at the Masque tonight." I guess it was very spur of the moment.

**Hector:** Brendan Mullen was one of the top three or five people who kept the Hollywood punk scene alive. He did it by creating the Masque punk club and I stress the word *punk*. The Whisky and The Starwood were supportive of the punk scene in its inception, but they also had other bands like Van Halen, The Runaways, The Vapors, etc.—more commercial and non-threatening bands with a somewhat rockstar vibe. But, the Masque was primarily punk with a few exceptions like The Nerves and The Go-Go's and a few others.

**Alice:** Brendan booked punk, plain and simple and if he liked you, he

didn't even have to hear your band. He might give you a gig just based on how he felt about you. Geza and Nickey Beat talked Brendan into giving us our first gig without ever playing him a single song. It was more about being on the same wavelength.

**Mike:** Brendan was always friendly to me from the first time I found my way to the Masque. When Nervous Gender was formed he was very supportive. He would come to our shows. When we saw each other at shows thirty years later, he would make sure to stop and check to see how I was doing.

**Javier:** I think the first time I met Brendan was when we played the Masque with The Nerves and F-Word. The Nerves had white suits on and I really liked F-Word. They were cool. We played the Masque a handful of times. I think we got about twenty bucks each time for gas back to San Diego.

**Hector:** The Zeros went to the Masque after a gig at The Whisky, if I'm not mistaken. We met Brendan and right away we liked him. He was a gentleman and very nice. Right away he offered us a gig after we told him we were a band. He was a super cool, down-to-earth, no-nonsense guy. He also supported the punk scene by making the Masque a rehearsal space. The Controllers used to rehearse there with Carla Maddog on drums. Brendan was about the music.

**Sean:** Brendan Mullen, Kateri Butler, Bibbe Hansen, and I often ate sushi together at Oomasa in downtown Los Angeles—sometimes by coincidence, sometimes by appointment. During these lively dinners we often spent a good deal of time discussing some of our favorite subjects—music and politics.

One evening I remember discussing something that bothered Brendan greatly. He said that he had heard several members of East L.A. punk bands claim that the Hollywood scene was tainted by racist overtones and that playing in Hollywood was virtually impossible due to this inherent bigotry. He knew that I was born and raised in East L.A. and had been on the scene at that time. He was curious to know if I felt the same way.

I assured him that I did not share this opinion, but I was also curious why he was so affected by this. Once again—in typical Brendan fashion—he worked himself up, not in a combative way but



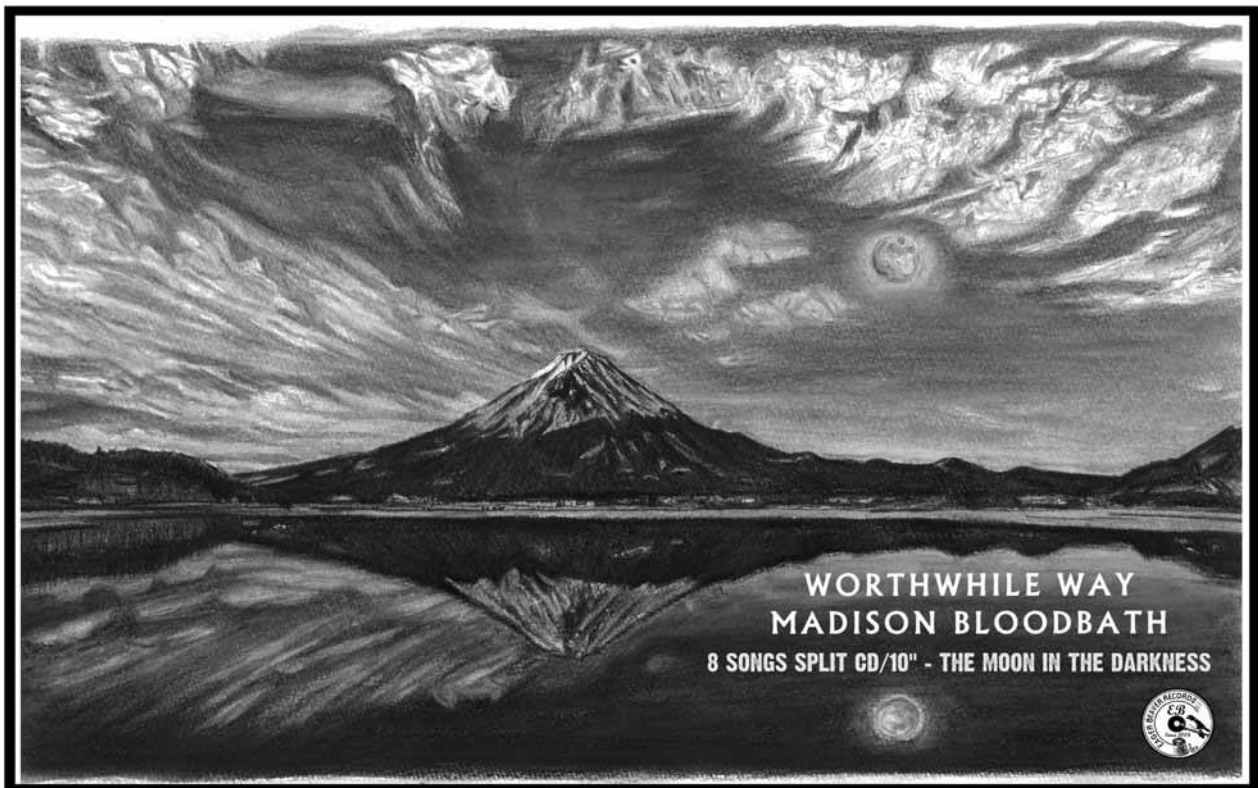
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**Imaginary band on the Canterbury roof, 1978**  
Hector Peñalosa, Spazz Attack, Dave Drive, and Alice Bag  
courtesy of Alice Bag



Seal and Liza | courtesy of Seal

**It wasn't just about music or clothes. We challenged the status quo with everything at our disposal—race, class, gender—but we did it by just being ourselves.**

—Alice Bag

he did become indignant. He was very proud of the fact that the Masque, the club he founded and the birthplace of L.A. punk, was so integrated.

The pride was not boastful but natural for a person who looked at the world not through race-tinted glasses but usually through a pair of ears. As long as I knew Brendan, he was always focused on the music. It was the sound of things that fascinated him, from the sound of language and dialects to the rhythms created by people from all cultures. I don't know if there was a genre of music he didn't like—though he had strong opinions—and he seemed able to find something to appreciate in almost every culture's music, especially if it was authentic.

After listening to Brendan rail against these accusations, I finally understood what upset him so greatly. It wasn't being labeled a racist, although that was pretty bad considering nothing could be further from the truth. It was that it would not reflect his musical taste and the sincerity of his commitment to music.

Punk, at least in Los Angeles anyway, was born of a group of misfits, outsiders, weirdos, and those that don't fit easily in society's compartments. Who better to champion the creative output of this band of outsiders than an outsider himself? A Scotsman in a land of make believe—Hollywood—would surely find the real and true spirit of music in a city known for creating false realities, and he did. He was a man whose ears knew no color. He may not have liked your band or your music, but it had nothing to do with the color of your skin. Of that, I am completely sure.

**Alice:** Absolutely right, Sean. I could not have said it better. Brendan led by example and helped turn the Masque into our safe place to be creative and though it was home base for many punks in the early days, it was by no means the only place we had to play. Many clubs, not only in Hollywood but all over Southern California, were eager to cater to the rapidly growing taste for punk. The Whisky a Go-Go even had a punk drink menu for a short time. Aside from Hollywood, in what other cities—or neighborhoods in the Greater L.A. area—were you invited to play and or watch punk bands?

**Margot:** San Francisco, San Diego, South Bay, and Orange County.

**Kid:** I saw bands in many places like Huntington Beach, Redondo Beach, the San Fernando Valley...

**Alice:** It seems to me that those of us who were involved in the Hollywood scene were happy to play in any city that had a scene and was willing to host shows. The Bags played up and down the West Coast, Seattle, Portland...

**Trudie:** ...San Francisco, San Diego, Downtown L.A., Redondo Beach, Huntington Beach, San Bernardino, Burbank, North Hollywood, Camarillo, Orange County/Anaheim, Torrance. I'm sure there is more.

**Alice:** Trudie and Hellin, you saw the Sex Pistols in Texas! Punk knew no boundaries. Except for maybe the national border...

**Margot:** When I was touring with my second band, Brian Brain, I experienced the most blatant racism in my punk career: I was racially profiled by Border Patrol and detained for no reason. While we were driving out of El Paso, Texas late at night, two very piggish border agents pulled our van over and assumed that a British punk rock band had just smuggled a Mexican woman across the border. They would not accept my California driver's license, the only I.D. I had, as proof that I was in the country legally. I am a U.S. citizen. They said, "Anyone can get one of those." I argued that I was within the U.S. and that I was not required to carry my passport but they would not listen and they detained me in a bungalow for hours, interrogating me on U. S. history and civics while they did not even check his passport) and crew waited nervously outside, fearing their bass player would be deported. That's Texas!

**Alice:** Racism, sexism, homophobia—all those things are still out there but for a few brief moments, for a small group of Hollywood punks, they ceased to exist.

### Pretty Fair and Open

*The myth that the Hollywood scene was racially discriminatory is sometimes used to explain the genesis of the East L.A. scene which blossomed around the Vex in late 1979, early 1980. I think we can call that myth "busted."*

*As the decade of the '70s came to a close, punk spread throughout the country, from the big urban cities where it had first taken hold*





out into the suburbs. Once there, it picked up the flavor of those particular communities. The Hollywood punk scene, which had once been a small, inclusive group of misfits ceased to exist in that state. There was never any feeling of rivalry between the original Hollywood scene and the East L.A. scene. As the L.A. scene expanded, it included a much broader collection of humanity and a wider range of ideals. The expansion brought positives as well as negatives and those differences may have stirred tensions in the early '80s.

I remember our scene—the original Hollywood scene—as egalitarian. It wasn't perfect or utopian, but it was pretty fair and open. We were not goody-goodies, not by a long shot. We were not always politically correct, but by and large we treated each other with respect. By 1980, I began pulling myself away from

the Hollywood scene. Too many of my friends were involved with drugs—especially heroin—and I started to lose them. I felt the lure of temptation. It would have been all too easy to slip into drug abuse and I wanted to avoid that particular pothole. At the same time, the audiences at our shows were changing, becoming more uniform, male-dominated, and less colorful. They didn't connect with our music in the same way the Masque audiences had, so I moved on.

I hope that you will consider the accounts of those of us who were there when you hear or read misinformed reports or writers with revisionist agendas tell our story. Go to the source. Just because something is in print doesn't make it true, even if those words appear in the Smithsonian catalog or the L.A. Times.

Question authority. Always.

# The Past Remains *Largely* Unwritten

*Michelle Habell-Pallan, Guest Curator, American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music, reveals the behind-the-scenes of the traveling exhibit.*

Thanks for this opportunity to give context. First, as one of the three curators of Experience Music Project's *American Sabor*, we send a big thank you to all the musicians, fans, and people behind the scenes whose creative energy conjured a vital, musical spirit. They've been the inspiration for our project that seeks to remember and share their creations via educational formats. Younger generations don't often have the opportunity to learn about the influence of Chicana/o and Latina/o communities in the making of what is considered "American" pop music as it has occurred across time and geography. We live in a moment in which the humanity and sheer diversity our communities are represented and remembered in are astonishingly narrow by mainstream corporate media and academia. Apparently, we have just arrived and have nothing to do with music scenes that occurred prior to this moment.

The music tells us this is not true. That's one of the reasons we desired to tell a different story based on evidence in the music itself. Across time and geography our music has often served as a response to those narrow definitions. Alice is right to be disturbed by the website's inaccuracies and so are we. We worked so hard to listen deeply and get the story right from the start because it is not often that we get the chance to share these stories in a traveling exhibit format. We never had the chance to review or consent to the inaccurate changes in our text as it was rewritten by editors at the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit Service for the website version.

We were initially very excited about the website's potential and appreciated the design of the website. We were shocked and appalled when we realized that our original text had been altered when the exhibit was condensed into a more compact traveling exhibit that included the website as a companion. As soon as we saw the inaccuracies, we insisted they be changed and that the tour of the physical exhibit be *halted* until corrected. We went back and forth until corrected panels were made to replace the inaccurate ones for the traveling exhibit, now currently at CSU Los Angeles. The website changes are currently underway! Unfortunately, the punk section wasn't the only section altered; so was



The Zeros, Chula Vista, CA, 1976

the salsa section and others. It remains a mystery to us why the changes were made in the first place.

The altered text's implication that the Hollywood punk scene was hostile to Latinos/as is confounding because the exhibit highlights how Chicanas like Alice were part of and helped make the Hollywood punk scene. The exhibit also asks why punk as a genre is rarely included in overarching scholarly histories of Latina music that document the music shared in Latino/a communities. Viewers can also listen to oral histories on the website that give a different perspective from the text and listen to sound modules that let the

music tell the story ([americansabor.org/radio](http://americansabor.org/radio)). Notably, Alice's own book, *Violence Girl: East LA Rage to Hollywood Stage: a Chicana Punk Memoir*, provides a much needed account of the openness of the scene.

We hoped the exhibit would start a conversation about the musicians and scenes featured there and move others to create new exhibits, write new histories, and generally share their stories. It's important to keep the dialogue going as this exhibit can serve as an entry into new discussions. It's very exciting to read Alice's never-before-published, amazing and much-needed interviews with the OG's here in Razorcake. Her article invites further investigation that will likely inspire new books, *testimonios*, music, and fans.

We also wanted to keep the story an open and evolving one. To that end, the American Sabor website blog (<http://americansabor.org/share-your-story>) invites music makers and lovers to upload their own stories for posting and preservation. When the exhibit concludes, the Library of Congress will archive posts for posterity. This is a rare opportunity to preserve our collective stories in this manner. This is one way to keep *American Sabor* an open story, with new voices that discuss their own experiences. We invite folks to post here so that their stories shape histories now and those written in the future. Can't wait to read them now and for our great, great grandchildren to read them!

Michelle Habell-Pallan is the Associate Professor, Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality and Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Music and Department of Communication at the University of Washington and author of *Loca Motion: The Travels of Chicana and Latina Popular Culture* (NYU Press)





# CLASS BIGOTRY in HIGHER EDUCATION

by **Chris Pepus**  
illustrations by **Eric Baskauskas**  
layout by **Matt Average**

**Whether it goes under the name “conservatism” or “libertarianism,” right-wing ideology is merely a set of contradictory excuses for the exploitation of cheap labor by hereditary wealth.**

**RIGHT-WING AUSTERITY POLICIES** are devastating U.S. education. Damage has been especially severe at the college level. Last March, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported<sup>1</sup> that state governments were spending “28 percent less per student on higher education, nationwide, in the current 2013 fiscal year,” adjusted for inflation, “than they did in 2008, when the recession hit.” Among the cuts’ many negative consequences is that they make college less accessible to low-income students. The CBPP discovered that tuition at four-year, public colleges rose 27% between 2008 and 2013.

At the federal level, the decade of austerity mandated by the 2011 budget agreement severely threatens education funding. The U.S. Department of Education was hit by automatic cuts earlier this year. Republicans are seeking additional cuts<sup>2</sup>, including steep ones in higher education<sup>3</sup>. That is hardly surprising. Whether it goes under the name “conservatism” or “libertarianism,” right-wing ideology is merely a set of contradictory excuses for the exploitation of cheap labor by hereditary wealth. At its best, education enhances critical thinking, which helps people see through scams like austerity policies. It can also provide opportunities for those who were not born rich. With sufficient education, working-class people might actually escape the trap of low-wage labor and perhaps even compete with rich kids for good jobs. Such outcomes are the stuff of conservative nightmares.

But if you think liberals are less devoted to social elitism than conservatives, you are mistaken. Higher education is the sector of society over which liberals have the most control. They have a strong hold on the most prestigious colleges, nearly all of which are private institutions unharmed by budget cuts in public education. Yet social exclusion is particularly blatant there.

In 2011, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published statistics on social class at the 50 wealthiest U.S. colleges, using the most recent data (from the 2008-09 academic year). The *Chronicle* reported the percentage of students at each institution who received Pell Grants, a federal scholarship designed for low- and middle-income undergraduates.

The richest and most prestigious private universities ranked among the least socially diverse. Only 6.5% of Harvard students received Pell Grants. Yale’s percentage stood at 8.9% and Princeton’s at 9.9%. The most socially egalitarian institution on the list was the University of California at Los Angeles. UCLA possessed an endowment only about 3% as lucrative as Harvard’s, but UCLA’s percentage of Pell recipients was over four times higher: 30.7%. The University of California at Berkeley was not listed, because it did not rank among the 50 richest colleges, but studies have placed its percentage of Pell Grant recipients in the same range as UCLA’s.

The UC system’s success in enrolling Pell students is due to an affirmative-action program for low-income applicants. UC officials developed that approach as a substitute for race-based preferences after California voters banned the latter by passing Proposition 209 in 1996. An unfortunate result of the California case is that it renewed the needless debate between those who believe class should replace race as a category of affirmative action and those who want to keep race-based preferences while continuing to disregard class. In fact, class should be viewed as an essential addition to existing categories of affirmative-action, rather than a replacement for them.

In the 1960s and ‘70s, when racial minorities and women were under-represented on campus to the degree that working-class people are today, liberals blamed racism and sexism, respectively. In response, liberals across the country demanded affirmative action; liberals in college administrations implemented it. Why don’t they acknowledge class bigotry and add class to the categories covered by affirmative action?

The answer is that, like conservatives, liberals support discrimination in favor of the social elite and against the working

class. (When I criticize liberals, friends sometimes ask, “But aren’t you a liberal?” No. I care about the working class, so that makes me a leftist.) Many liberal faculty and administrators are politically active, but that activism does not extend to challenging social exclusion at the institutions they run. The issue is discrimination, rooted in class bigotry. Discrimination in college admissions will remain as long as the people leave colleges in the hands of bigots.

Leaders of America’s top institutions of higher learning offer two main excuses for enrolling so few working-class students: prestige and money. They claim that they cannot admit more working-class applicants without lowering their academic standards and jeopardizing their high rankings. Likewise, they argue that the cost of financial aid makes it difficult to enroll greater numbers of low-income students.

The first excuse should sound familiar. It is the same one college executives offered decades ago to explain why they could not admit more racial minorities. They then used it again to explain why they could not admit more women. It is no more credible the third time around. In the 2013 edition of the prestigious *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, UC Berkeley ranked eighth in the world, with UCLA twelfth. It is not true that colleges lose standing when they improve social diversity.

The money excuse is no less ridiculous. We have already seen that wealthy private institutions have the lowest percentage of Pell Grant students and relatively poor public institutions have the highest. Even so, rich, socially exclusive colleges are lavishly subsidized by taxpayers. All the leading post-secondary institutions in the U.S. are exempt from federal, state, and local taxes. Aided by such generosity, Ivy League universities in particular are rapidly expanding their financial holdings. Harvard’s endowment has climbed to \$32.7 billion, an increase of 11.3% over last year’s total. Yale’s has reached \$20.8 billion, 12.5% higher than last year.

Contrast the extravagant flow of tax-free money to the Ivies with the budget cuts now decimating all levels of public education. Contrary to stories in corporate media, it is not true that America lacks money for education. It’s just that the money is given away in the form of grants and tax exemptions to unaccountable private institutions that already possess great wealth.

It is no secret that discrimination against working-class applicants is standard practice at elite colleges. In 1998, William G. Bowen, the former president of Princeton, and Derek Bok, the former president of Harvard, offered a stark view of class bigotry among top collegiate administrators and “experts.” In their book, *The Shape of the River*, written with four other education scholars, Bowen and Bok opposed class-based affirmative action. One reason they gave was that “students with low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely than students of equivalent ability from high socioeconomic backgrounds to complete their studies, attain professional or doctoral degrees, and earn high incomes.”

That is social profiling. If earning less money after graduation or obtaining fewer advanced degrees disqualified a group for affirmative action, then women and racial minorities would have been disqualified at the outset. Likewise, with these eminent authors urging college officials to view low-income applicants as bad admissions risks, it is no mystery that U.S. colleges enroll so few low-income students. Given that Bowen, Bok, et al. wrote their book to defend race-based admissions preferences, their slur against working-class applicants pointedly illustrates the class prejudice and selective morality of posh liberals.

Another form of discrimination that higher-education officials openly admit is the practice of granting preferences to “legacies,” children of alumni. That policy simply perpetuates elite colleges’ historical class bias. The authors of *The Shape of the River* did not object to affirmative action for the rich and well-connected, though their research showed it to be viciously discriminatory. They reported that white legacy applicants at several elite (but unnamed) private colleges were twice as likely to be admitted as white non-legacy applicants (44% to 22%). Likewise, white legacies who only scored in the 1100s, out of a possible 1600, on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) obtained admission at about the same rate as white *non*-legacies who scored 1300-1600.

Defenders of legacy privilege claim that the practice is justified because it honors tradition. But since most institutions of higher





# Elite liberals will probably never realize how absurd they look fervently waving the banner of diversity while relentlessly enforcing class privilege.

learning used to be entirely made up of white men, tradition would be equally honored by preferences for that group. What sane person would fail to see *that* as discriminatory? (The courts would also see it as illegal.) Why is discrimination in favor of the rich acceptable? On campus or off, elite liberals go to great lengths to avoid that question. They will probably never realize how absurd they look fervently waving the banner of diversity while relentlessly enforcing class privilege.

In March 2006, the dean of admissions at Kenyon College, Jennifer Delahunty Britz wrote a *New York Times* editorial apologizing for her admissions policies. In the piece, “To All the Girls I’ve Rejected,” Britz stated that she and her staff had been giving preference to male applicants. She explained that Kenyon needed to maintain gender balance and that there were too many qualified female applicants. “The fat acceptance envelope is simply more elusive for today’s accomplished young women,” Britz wrote. The only data she offered to back her assertion was this statistic: “more than 55 percent of our applicants are female, a proportion that is steadily increasing.”

Britz later contradicted her *NYT* piece in a statement published on the Kenyon web site: “Some critics accuse Kenyon of favoring girls; others say we’re favoring boys. The fact is we’re favoring neither.” Even so, she ignited debate about whether U.S. colleges discriminate against female applicants. That question has drawn intense interest from government and media. In 2009, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission demanded data from 19 colleges and universities in order to investigate whether those institutions were discriminating against women. But in March 2011, Dina Titus, a Democrat on the commission, proposed suspending the investigation without issuing a report. The CRC agreed to Titus’s proposal and the data it collected remains unpublished.

While Britz was apologizing and liberals were looking for discrimination, someone at the *NYT* should have mentioned the Century Foundation’s 2004 report. Of 131 highly rated colleges and universities with more than 200 students surveyed by the foundation, Kenyon ranked 118th in social diversity. Only 8.3% of Kenyon students received Pell Grants. Britz did not mention her institution’s appalling record of social exclusion, let alone apologize for it. I guess “To All the Uppity Proles I’ve Rejected” isn’t a sufficiently catchy title.

The *Times* published seven letters to the editor in response to Britz’s confession, but none of the letters mentioned the country-club slant of Kenyon’s admissions policies. That is odd, because, in her editorial, Britz indicated that her concept of academic qualification was heavily influenced by social class. She described a recent female applicant: “She was the leader/president/editor/captain/lead

actress in every activity in her school. She had taken six advanced placement courses and had been selected for a prestigious state leadership program. In her free time, this whirlwind of achievement had accumulated more than 300 hours of community service in four different organizations.”

What about the student’s grades and test scores? “Unfortunately, her test scores and grade point average placed her in the middle of our pool.” Britz and her staff admitted the applicant, after some debate. Britz asserted that there would have been no debate had the applicant been male. But the most telling point about that anecdote is that Britz believes middling grades, relative to the applicant pool, are fine as long as they are accompanied by extracurricular activities of the sort that require leisure and money.

That attitude privileges upper- and middle-class applicants. Many students from low-income, or simply working-class, households have to work after school and during summers to help support their families. Also, in families in which parents work long hours for low wages, older children frequently babysit younger siblings. For such students, there is rarely time for extracurricular activities. Academic performance is the only way they can earn a place at a leading college. If those facts have any meaning for Jennifer Delahunty Britz, they are not evident in her *New York Times* piece or her institution’s admissions practices.

By the way, Kenyon’s admissions practices include legacy preferences. Dean Britz is not troubled by that, even though a 2007 article in Kenyon’s student newspaper revealed that legacies made up approximately 7% of that year’s freshman class. “Legacy is a factor at every college and university in America,” Britz deceitfully stated. While family connections undoubtedly play a role in any college’s admissions process, many institutions do not offer large-scale, formalized legacy preferences of the sort conferred by Kenyon. “I believe the legacy factor will become bigger as time goes on,” Britz predicted, without apology this time. Her view of disadvantaged women specifically excludes *economically* disadvantaged women.

In the *Times*’s defense, the paper has finally begun to publish stories on the small percentages of low-income students at leading colleges. (The problem has existed for longer than *The New York Times*, so we should probably withhold congratulation.) In November 2012, the *Times* actually endorsed the idea of class-based affirmative action—in a few words buried in the middle of an editorial defending race-based affirmative action. Tellingly, *NYT* writers failed to follow up by pressing colleges and universities to create the goals and timetables needed to implement the policy. The *Times* did publish a piece criticizing Washington University in St. Louis for the disgrace of having (if you can believe it) an even lower percentage of Pell Grant recipients on campus than Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. But the *Times* still refuses to call such abuses by their true names: bigotry, discrimination.

Will activists help when journalists and educational officials won’t? The National Organization for Women addressed the issue of class in “Talking About Affirmative Action,” posted on the organization’s website<sup>4</sup>. The talking points included this pairing:

**Myth: Affirmative Action should be based on economic need.**

**Fact: Affirmative Action is necessary so that women and people of color of every economic class have the opportunity to enter all fields. [The formatting is original.]**

Note how the writer(s) of the NOW talking points frame the issue. Either we can have affirmative action “based on economic need,” or we can have the current version of the policy, based on gender and race. Why must we choose between those approaches? The NOW doesn’t say. In the early years of affirmative action, when feminists demanded a gender-based version of the policy, male liberals didn’t pretend that they could not accede to those demands without ending race-based preferences. If they had, feminists would have called them liars—and sexists. Yet, leading feminists and other liberals continue to repeat the lie that class-based affirmative action would necessarily end all other types of the program.

Hiding behind the NOW’s inclusion-speak—“women and people of color of every economic class”—is pure class bigotry. When



institutions employ affirmative action based on gender, without also basing that policy on class, they place an additional burden of discrimination on working-class men, while allowing rich men to keep their privileges. They also allow a small elite of economically privileged women to monopolize opportunities ostensibly created for women in general. NOW leaders think that's fine, so they should add another section to their talking points:

**Myth: The National Organization for Women supports affirmative action for all women. Open the doors of opportunity to women!**

**Fact: No white-trash girl is taking my daughter's place at Harvard. I am legacy! Hear me roar!**

In an article published earlier this year<sup>5</sup>, I argued that we should expand civil rights laws to include social class. If we implement that change, the class bigots of higher education will find themselves in court. They will also be deprived of their strongest defense: secrecy. Private colleges are not required to supply data on the family incomes or social backgrounds of their students. Consequently, there is only one verifiable indicator of the number of low-income students on campus, i.e. Pell Grants. That indicator is deeply flawed and exaggerates social diversity.

Writers on higher education commonly estimate that Pell Grants go to students from the bottom half of the U.S. income scale. But the federal government awards Pells to many students with family incomes above the median for U.S. households (at last count, \$51,017), and the number of such awards has risen dramatically in recent years. Since 2007, the total number of Pell Grant recipients has increased by 80%, and those with family incomes over \$60,000 per year has increased by nearly 900%. Government statistics for the 2011-2012 academic year revealed that some Pells went to students with annual family incomes exceeding \$100,000. Harvard's, Princeton's, and Yale's percentages of Pell students have finally risen above single digits, but that fact must be weighed against the remarkable increase in the number of Pell Grants nationwide, especially among middle- and upper-middle-class students.

Also, each college's percentage of Pell Grant recipients includes recruited athletes, a favored group of applicants who are more likely to come from low- or middle-income families than most students at elite institutions.

Under expanded civil rights laws, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission could require colleges to report what percentage of their students fall into each income quartile, how many are legacies or recruited athletes, how many are the first in their family to attend postsecondary education, and how many have parents who are manual laborers. The commission could also demand that such data be cross-referenced against students' standardized test scores and high school grade-point averages. If Americans had that information, if they knew exactly how tax-exempt educational institutions rig the admissions process to favor the rich and exclude the working class, they would demand an end to the admissions-rigging, the tax exemptions, or both.

It is no accident that America has a socially segregated regime of higher education. Class bigots on campus meticulously constructed it, aided by class bigots in government, in media, and even in the vanguard of liberal activism. What the elite established by discrimination, the people must replace by law.

#### Endnotes

1. [cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3927](http://cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3927)
2. [cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3942](http://cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3942)
3. [cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3760](http://cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3760)
4. [now.org/issues/affirm/talking.html](http://now.org/issues/affirm/talking.html)
5. [razorcake.org/columns/expand-civil-rights-laws-to-include-social-class](http://razorcake.org/columns/expand-civil-rights-laws-to-include-social-class)

To read an expanded version of this article:  
[razorcake.org/columns/class-bigotry-in-higher-education-](http://razorcake.org/columns/class-bigotry-in-higher-education-)



# THE BODY ECLECTIC:

## SARA HENDREN RETHINKS DEVICES FOR THE DISABLED, AND I CONTEMPLATE MY CYBORG BOOBS

BY CHERYL KLEIN

LAYOUT BY LAJREN MEASURE

### 1. PEG-LEGGED PRINCESS

I wanted to be handicapped when I was a kid.

Handicapped predated “disabled,” “differently-abled,” and “physically challenged,” but postdated “crippled.” When I wasn’t busy playing Olympic gymnast—i.e. someone extraordinarily able-bodied—I was pretending I couldn’t even walk. I turned a green fold-up stepstool into a wheelchair or swung around on the wooden crutches my dad made me for Christmas.

I can only hope to support my future children’s odd hobbies so non-judgmentally.

When my mom read Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House* books to my sister and me, I didn’t want to be imaginative, rambunctious Laura, probably because I actually *was* like her. I wanted to be good, beautiful, blind Mary. I also loved a book called *Mine for Keeps*, about a girl with leg braces and a puppy, which I envied in that order. I taught myself the sign language alphabet from a book called *Different and Alike*. I ran my fingers over its page of Braille.

I’m not sure what the appeal of disability was, but I have some theories. My older cousin was deaf, and I was fascinated by the beige crescent moon that hovered above her better ear, its little tubes and custom proto ear bud. For me it was all about the accessories. I would have found dyslexia or kidney failure highly unglamorous because they were invisible.

I was just under three when my sister was born. Her legs were crooked from being crunched up in my mom’s uterus the wrong way. For a while she wore white casts on both legs to straighten them out. My mom worried that people would think she’d dropped her baby down the stairs or something, but I was deeply envious. Her doctor gave me my own arm cast for a while, my mom says, but I don’t remember this, and I certainly don’t remember anyone taking it off with a saw, the way I’d seen on TV.

My therapist is always telling me how scarred I am by my sister’s birth, which was nothing out of the ordinary by most measures, but must have hit me at a particular developmental moment and been handled by my parents in a particular way. Suddenly, I wasn’t the adorable baby anymore. Suddenly,

I was praised only for my self-sufficiency, for being a “big girl.”

The temptation to retreat into a state of needy specialness—like my plaster-stockinged, adored baby sister—must have been high. If I could be an Olympic gymnast, awesome. I would be lean-muscled, spring-loaded, and powerful. But what if I couldn’t do it? As young as five or six, I felt the pressure of my own expectations and those I perceived from my parents and the world around me. If only I had some visible marker of life’s challenges—a hearing aid or a white cane or a wheelchair—people would understand I had a tough road. Then, when I proceeded to do “normal” things like cross the street or read a book, those small acts would be cast in an admirable, magical light. I would be a peg-legged princess.

### 2. THE CURE FOR HYPOCHONDRIA IS CANCER

As most people over thirty know, the romance of illness and disability wanes as your body reveals its limitations. By the time I was diagnosed with early(ish)-stage breast cancer at thirty-five, I’d survived a hernia and a miscarriage that had turned me into a PTSD-suffering hypochondriac. Every time my fingers tingled, I was sure it was multiple sclerosis. I thought the bumps on my spine were neck cancer. If I went twenty-four hours without shitting, I was certain I had some kind of malignant, fatal intestinal blockage. Gone were my childhood fantasies of disability-cool. As I saw it now, I only had two choices, which were not really choices: be a “big girl”-grownup in perfect health, or die a slow, painful death.

But as it turns out, cancer is a pretty good cure for hypochondria. It’s like falling off

the cliff, hitting the ground, and discovering that you can walk on the bones you always feared breaking.

Arguably, I became the needy, special kid I always wanted to be: I was out-and-proud with my bald chemo head, and although I claimed it was absurd when strangers approached me and told me how brave I was (because how did they know? Where were they when I was sobbing so hard my sinuses swelled shut?), I also relished the attention. Days after my double mastectomy, I was taking three-mile walks. I kept working. I kept writing. I taught an online class on top of my regular job during my final rounds of chemo.

Even from the vantage point of five months, I can see how desperate I was to be a model patient, to be some sort of sexy wounded superhero, to prove myself indestructible even as I surrendered to the facts of my dependency—on doctors, medicine, family, and friends.

In her essay “All Technology is Assistive Technology,” artist and writer Sara Hendren says:

*All people, over the course of their lives, traffic between times of relative independence and dependence. So the questions cultures ask, the technologies they invent, and how those technologies broadcast a message about their users—weakness and strength, agency and passivity—are important ones.*

In other words, you might say I was at a disadvantage because I no longer had tits that could breastfeed an infant. If/when my partner and I adopt a baby, a bottle full of formula will be the boob equivalent of a wheelchair. But that bottle full of formula is also an assistive device for the baby, who does not have the ability to walk to the kitchen and make herself a taco. And taco-

I CAN ONLY HOPE TO SUPPORT  
MY FUTURE CHILDREN’S  
ODD HOBBIES so  
NON-JUDGMENTALLY.







PHOTO BY RACHEL MURRAY FRAMINGHEDDU



makin' stoves are assistive devices because humans have to eat cooked food because we don't have the big guts, like our simian ancestors, that would make us able to digest huge amounts of raw food.

In other words, my independence is a shattered myth. But so is yours.

### 3. "IF YOU CAN ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEBATES WITHIN THE FIELD, I'LL ACTUALLY TRUST YOU *MORE*."

Sometime during my treatment, I discovered Abler ([ablersite.org](http://ablersite.org)). Sara Hendren's blog about "art, adaptive technologies and prosthetics, the future of human bodies in the built environment, and related ideas." It's one part design blog, one part TED talk, and one part critical theory class—but with lots of pictures and stories about really cool things that are helping people live in their bodies in more interesting, useful ways.

The devices Hendren profiles range from the über-practical (a spoon that counterbalances a shaky hand) to the

tech gets made, talked about, promoted. So now I think of Abler as a kind of intervention into tech journalism—trying to bring some productive skepticism and uncertainty about whose bodies need "fixing" and what the material languages of design do for cultural understandings of ability and need. I'm happy to say that Abler just became its own channel over at Gizmodo ([abler.gizmodo.com](http://abler.gizmodo.com)), one of the big tech websites that's now expanding into design, architecture, and urbanism as well. I'm thrilled; it's just the kind of growth and change I hoped for with Abler—that so-called "assistive technologies" would be seen right up alongside mainstream tech developments.

**Klein:** In your "Adaptation, Part I" post—sort of the backstory and mission statement of your blog—you talk about Western culture's obsession with statistics, measuring ourselves against a "norm." In the recent past, I fell down a rabbit hole of statistics, first as they pertained to fertility, then as they pertained to cancer survival after being diagnosed with early(ish)-stage breast cancer last year. And, not surprisingly, I discovered they're only

times. Lately I've taken to saying to doctors: "Look, I understand what a double-blind study is; I know that there are differing opinions about [this or that treatment, or the question of whether to treat]. If you can acknowledge the debates in the field, I'll actually trust you *more* than if you act as though your opinion is the only possible one." This helps me get more nuanced conversations going with medical professionals.

I can't overstate enough the importance of a long historical perspective in these matters. Historians of science and medicine can help us hold our "presentism" in check; that's why it's so important to understand the bell curve, for example, as a very culturally situated phenomenon, not some universal way of organizing people and populations.

### 4. LIKE A CYBORG

I'd been thinking about my boobs in an Abler-like context ever since getting them hacked off. Although I did mourn the opportunity to breastfeed, I did not mourn them aesthetically. My natural boobs had been DDs that were already succumbing a bit to gravity. My unspoken deal with them—not that the body is ever true to its word—was that I would appreciate them as long as they stayed healthy. When a tumor appeared on my mammogram, they were out of there. Spaghetti straps and halter tops and B-cups that enabled me to don secretary-chic blouses without looking frumpy were in.

Here's how fake boobs are made, post-mastectomy (it's a different process for starlets, because they have real breast tissue to work with): The reconstructive surgeon stretches the pectoral muscles and puts a small "tissue expander" implant underneath. It's rock hard and crinkly at the edges, like having a crumpled up paper bag inside your body, but from the outside it looks pretty normal. There's a little metal port, which he finds later with one of those stud-finder thingamabobs your dad used when hammering a nail into the wall. That tells him where to put the needle he'll use to fill the deflated plastic bag with water, stretching the muscle until it's flexible enough to hold whatever size boob you want. In a second, shorter surgery, he swaps out the place-holder implants for softer silicone ones.

It is as weird as it sounds.

I felt like a cyborg—which was kind of rad.

Like a lot of people, I'd always thought of plastic surgeons as the least noble of doctors, but that changed when I watched Dr. Max Lehfeldt—my nattily dressed plastic surgeon—sketch on my body with a purple Sharpie. I realized he was an artist who worked with the most difficult of materials—materials that needed good blood flow, materials that talked back.

Sometimes I think of myself as an amputee (though it's not like I had to learn to walk again on my fake boobs, so I realize the comparison minimizes the experience of actual amputees); because my oncological

## I'D SURVIVED A HERNIA AND A MISCARRIAGE THAT HAD TURNED ME INTO A PTSD-SUFFERING HYPOCHONDRIAC.



whimsically futuristic (a suit that allows its wearer to play the strings of a suspension bridge like a harp). What they have in common is outside-the-box thinking, in which our bodies are the box.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to email interview Hendren about Abler:

**Cheryl Klein:** How did you first develop an interest in the intersection of art, design, disability, and science?

**Sara Hendren:** Abler came about in a really unformed and intuitive way at first; I wanted to find a way to document the ways that artists and designers—not just engineers and programmers—addressed challenges in the body in really interesting and unexpected ways. So I just started collecting work that circled very broadly around this idea of ability and disability as mediated through prosthetic devices. I was also starting to change my practice as an artist pretty significantly, but slowly, so I decided to make a website that would be outward-facing, pointing to the work of others, not just a documentation of my own work.

From there, over time, I developed a point of view about these devices and how

useful to a point. How did you come to an alternate, non-bell-curve-based view of the body and world? Was it ever an uphill battle? (Obviously I'm looking for tips here!)

**Hendren:** I get it, I really do. My own first experience of becoming a "citizen-patient" happened before I was ever really consciously thinking about disability; it was in my experience with pregnancy and childbearing, three times over. Once I started looking around at birth options, talking to doctors and midwives, really digging into the research and reading widely, I realized that there are plenty of medical practices around pregnancy and birthing that aren't supported by science—they're about liability and hospital protocols. That doesn't mean they're evil, but they're not suited for individuals, only for groups in the most abstracted sense.

So I think in every case of abnormality—whether mere atypicality or a true diseased state—we have to look at what gets medicalized with an eye toward history, and to be prepared to ask a lot of questions of a lot of different kinds of experts. It's exhausting, that work, but no one can do it for us. I've had to be reminded of this the hard way many



MODEL: DANIELLE ORNER, PHOTO BY RACHEL MURRAY FRAMINGHEDDU


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# Kettle Rebellion



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surgeon had a “no nipple preservation” policy, and my plastic surgeon doesn’t like to rebuild them on patients who’ve received radiation (radiated skin is understandably finicky), I am still nipple-free. There is a part of me that is visibly Not As I Was Born.

Well, I guess I wasn’t born with boobs, but you know what I mean.

Now I’m wearing this internal prosthetic that is also a work of art. It’s the type of art that’s meant to look natural, but what if I decided to get really postmodern? What if my implants had goldfish swimming in them, like the heels of 1970s platform shoes? What if they could somehow hold my iPod or keep me cool on hot days?

In grad school, I took a class called Popular, Political and Postmodern Performance from a woman named Jennifer Miller, who’d worked as a bearded lady at Coney Island. The subject of Cirque du Soleil came up in

So I want design that’s not necessarily about function. I also want the friction of questions, the opportunity for a designed artifact or system to hold up questions, indefinitely.

In general—outside of disability—I want to see artists and designers view their work as inquiry, and to wed their practices together with researchers in fields outside their own. Not as culture makers who merely *react, respond, critique* the “real work” of Big Science, Big Data, etc.—but as thinkers with a stake as citizens in these matters, and as people who are skilled at making expressive, collaborative, often publicly accessible work about science and tech *right alongside* those fields. More residencies and such that take place in institutions that aren’t normally open to artists.

**Klein:** I really appreciate the historical longview you mention, and I agree that it’s missing from a lot of tech journalism (the

around their own assumptions about who might use which device for what end.

**Klein:** Who are your critical influences? You mention historian David Edgerton, and it seems like Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto”—and her idea that we’re all a mix of real and imagined, biological and fabricated—is threaded throughout Abler.

**Hendren:** Yes, Haraway for sure—especially her refusal to be a kind of Luddite feminist, and instead to claim the critical political space that’s possible in *embracing* technology and the future—with critical wits intact. I love her idea that the cyborg should embrace its capacity to “transgress boundaries, make potent fusions, and suggest even dangerous possibilities”—that these explorations are, she said, “one part of needed political work.”

**Klein:** In your research, you encounter all kinds of new devices, prosthetics, etc. What pieces have resonated most strongly with you as a person and as an artist, just on a gut level?

**Hendren:** I frequently come back to Wendy Jacob’s squeeze chair project, one she did in collaboration with Temple Grandin. That was one of the first projects I saw in this vein of critical design around disability, and it made me realize what was possible. I also adore Lauren McCarthy’s work, especially her *Conversacube*, Michael Kontonopoulos’s various measures of discontent, Jennifer Crupi’s gestural jewelry, Noam Toran’s desire management and related devices/films, and so many more.

**Klein:** How has producing Abler affected your practice as an artist?

**Hendren:** Profoundly! I keep these projects like a set of imaginary friends, in every sense, as exemplars for my own work. Writing about them forces me to examine what their operative force is—*why* they work so well, or what questions they raise, and so on.

**Klein:** And now I’m about to get in my car and drive to work, which of course is an adaptive technology, because I don’t have the time or stamina to walk fifteen miles every day.

#### Additional Reading

- “All Technology is Assistive Technology” by Sara Hendren: [medium.com/thoughtful-design/a8b9a581eb62](https://medium.com/thoughtful-design/a8b9a581eb62)
- “Introducing Abler” by Sara Hendren: [abler.gizmodo.com/introducing-abler-all-technology-is-assistive-technol-1469902407](https://abler.gizmodo.com/introducing-abler-all-technology-is-assistive-technol-1469902407)
- Bespoke Innovations: [bespokeinnovations.com](https://bespokeinnovations.com)
- The Alternative Limb Project: [thealternativelimbproject.com](https://thealternativelimbproject.com)
- “A Cyborg Manifesto” by Donna Haraway: [wayback.archive.org/web/20120214194015/http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20120214194015/http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html)
- Wendy Jacobs’ Squeeze Chair Project: [wendyjacob.net/?page\\_id=123](https://wendyjacob.net/?page_id=123)
- Lauren McCarthy’s *Conversacube*: [lauren-mccarthy.com/conversacube](https://lauren-mccarthy.com/conversacube)
- Michael Kontopolos: [mkontopolos.com](https://mkontopolos.com)
- Jennifer Crupi: [jennifercrupi.com/work.html](https://jennifercrupi.com/work.html)



## MY INDEPENDENCE IS A SHATTERED MYTH. BUT SO IS YOURS.

class one day. She acknowledged the talent of Cirque performers, but confessed she missed the pared-down, visible apparatuses that are so much a part of circus imagery—the ladders and ropes and rigging.

When I think of Abler, I think of Jennifer Miller, and not just because she wore her beard off-duty, forcing those who met her to contemplate bodily norms. Abler suggests that if we make the rigging visible, the performance will be that much more spectacular.

### 5. ARTISTS AS CITIZENS

**Klein:** I love how you highlight ways that adaptive devices can be both visible and stylish—and as such, not sources of shame. There’s a stereotype of wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc. as being clunky and strictly utilitarian. On the flip-side, there’s a stereotype of art (fine art more than design, perhaps) as being frivolous—stuff to decorate rich people’s houses. Clearly a lot of artists and designers are defying this. How can we encourage more artists to do so, at both the academic and community levels?

**Hendren:** Yes, both the medicalization of assistive tech and the marginalization of artists are troublesome realities that I want to see change. So I’m for “better design” in the development of so-called “assistive” devices; it’s great to bring more design integrity to these objects, full stop. But I’m wanting artists and designers to do something more ambitious and more subtle at once: I want more “critical design” or “interrogative design” around prosthetics and these ideas of the medicalized and normal/abnormal body.

“breathless tech utopianism” you mention). Are there particular innovations you see in the past that resonate with Abler? You talk about glasses jumping the divide from medical device to fashion—are there other devices that you see having taken a similar, if maybe subtler, path?

**Hendren:** You’ll see hearing aids and canes and wheelchairs all getting new design attention, and there are customized limbs (for a steep price) via places like Bespoke Innovations and the Alternative Limb Project.

In the case of canes, for sure, you’d see some beautifully carved, ornate models prior to the twentieth century. After a long series of decades of looking pretty medical, we’re seeing that design attention return. So there are, yes, longer stories other than glasses. But glasses are so striking because they literally don’t share any medical associations with other kinds of assistive tech.

**Klein:** There are debates within disability communities about definitions of disability and what needs to be “fixed.” (Deaf people who see cochlear implants as a threat to a vibrant deaf culture, for example.) How does Abler enter into these discussions? Have you encountered any resistance or skepticism from the intended users of the devices you highlight?

**Hendren:** These are very important questions indeed, and I have long tried to highlight those undercurrents and tensions, because they’re discussions worth having in public. I try to highlight as much “interrogative design” as I do “functional prosthetics,” precisely to keep a productive uncertainty alive about who has “special needs” and what the devices would be to meet those needs. I also encourage designers to maintain a skeptical stance



# TONY MOLINA



SEAN HEWITT

PHOTOS BY SEAN HEWITT AND RINGO ROCK YAY  
<http://seanhewitt.virb.com> <http://ringorockyay.tumblr.com>

INTERVIEW/LAYOUT BY DARYL

**Tony Molina doesn't like to complicate things and that's one of the things I admire most about him. We create a lot of barriers in punk. We have to protect ourselves from what threatens us. But, sometimes we block out things we might actually enjoy.**

**Tony is one of those people who ignores the barriers. He transcends the static and focuses on the elemental properties, whether it's the groove, the vibe, or the riff.**

**His previous band, The Ovens, were jaw droppers. The mix of shredding, riffage, and infectious melodies constantly bewildered and**

**intrigued people. Tony developed this sound further with the release of the *Dissed and Dismissed* LP on Melters and the *6 Tracks 7"* on Matador.**

**Whether he's doing a West Coast tour opening for Fucked Up, or fronting his hardcore band—Caged Animal—in an Oakland basement, he performs with an allegiance to the music and to himself.**

**I tried to squeeze the meaning of life out of him and in total Tony fashion, his responses are brief yet sincere, just like any track on *Dissed and Dismissed*. You'll travel miles in seconds. No explanation necessary.**

**Daryl:** So I always wanted to do an Ovens interview, but just never got around to it.

**Tony:** Yeah.

**Daryl:** And I feel like I better interview you now, before you're on the cover of *Guitar Player* or something. You've been doing a lot of interviews, but none of them seem to be addressing what I want to know. Like, what do you really hate about the label, "the Yngwie of Bay Area Punk?"

**Tony:** Ughhh. Well, I don't listen to that guy and I don't like his music. So, that's just annoying.

**Daryl:** Are there a lot of shredders who you don't like?

**Tony:** You mean in the rock world?

**Daryl:** Yeah.

**Tony:** No, I just don't listen to it. I don't listen to any bands that have technical players, like Steve Vai or something.

**Daryl:** How would you describe the way you play guitar compared to the Steve Vais and the Yngwies?

**Tony:** They're technical players and I don't think I am. I just learned how to play guitar from bands that I like.

**Daryl:** Like who?

**Tony:** Fast Eddie Clark, you know? Motörhead. Black Sabbath.

**Daryl:** What band were you playing in when you really feel like you learned how to play guitar?

**Tony:** Well, The Ovens was the first band where I made the guitar the emphasis of the music. 'Cause I played in hardcore bands before that and some punk bands, but that isn't really guitar music.

**Daryl:** Just power chord riffs.

**Tony:** Right. When I was a kid I'd learned all the Metallica songs and Slayer songs, so I knew how to play that kinda shit before I was even in any bands.

**Daryl:** So the epic soloing just came out when you were doing The Ovens?

**Tony:** And it's funny 'cause I feel like there was a point in that band—by the time we made the third album—I just decided that the guitar was going to be the main part. Focus on the riff. And I don't feel like the first two albums are like that at all. So, over time it just became about guitar shit and not about songs.

**Daryl:** Alright, so *Beau Goes to the Hospital* is the first one?

**Tony:** Right.

**Daryl:** And the second one is the Tumult Records one?

**Tony:** No, the second one was recorded by Kurt Bloch.

**Daryl:** Oh, this is the unreleased one?

**Tony:** Yeah, it sucks. It's never coming out. We're never releasing it. [laughs] I mean there's a 7" coming out of the four good songs on it.

**Daryl:** But that 7" isn't the "final recordings" one?

**Tony:** No. That one is coming out soon too, though.

**Daryl:** What is it that you dislike about *Beau Goes to the Hospital*?

**Tony:** That was the first time I ever wrote pop songs and I just didn't know what I was doing. I was so young when I wrote all those songs; I just kinda cringe whenever I hear it. We were listening to stuff at the time and it really rubbed off on us.

**Daryl:** Like who?

**Tony:** During that time we were only listening to The Flaming Lips and Hickey. [laughs] I still like both those bands, but I just kinda feel like that album has this little kid pop punk vibe that isn't all that tight.

**Daryl:** On your website you credit all the singing and lyrics for that record to Rory?

**Tony:** [laughs] Yeah, he was in the band at that time and I can't remember what happened, but he didn't show up for the recording. So he didn't play on the album.

**Daryl:** Do you remember what the original artwork for *Beau Goes to the Hospital* was?

**Tony:** There was a few. There was one tape we made where it was photos from the *Lords of Chaos* book.

**Daryl:** That's pretty fitting. [laughs]

**Tony:** Yeah.

**Daryl:** How many rhythm guitarists did The Ovens have?

**Tony:** We had Kyle, from Dystrophy. Then we had Rory. Then Matt was in it for a second.

**Daryl:** Bleyle?

**Tony:** Yeah, he didn't even play a show, but he was there for a second so I'm counting Matt. And then we had Andrew. And that's it.

**Daryl:** Oh, four isn't too many. That's not necessarily Spinal Tap status.

**Tony:** Totally.

**Daryl:** Alright, one more question about The Ovens. And this might carry through to your current projects. There's gotta be some comparisons you're absolutely sick of hearing. Like, I remember being told that The Ovens sound like The Fucking Champs, and listening to them and being totally disappointed.

**Tony:** I've definitely heard that lot, and that's just another band that I've never really listened to. I gave them a listen and I thought it was pretty good. But I've never listened to a whole album. And this shit just keeps happening, where people say I sound like a band and I've never heard that band.

**Daryl:** What comparisons have you gotten recently?

**Tony:** Well, it's weird. No one ever says anything that gets me pissed, but people are always



What you're saying about  
punk being a lifestyle and  
the politics involved,



RINGO ROCK YAY

I'm down with all that  
shit, but I don't do it.



comparing me to Pavement, The Lemonheads, or the Gin Blossoms or something.

**Daryl:** [laughs] What?

**Tony:** I don't have anything against any of those bands. Oh, Yo La Tengo, too! I just don't listen to that kinda stuff.

**Daryl:** Do your influences draw more from the punker side of the spectrum?

**Tony:** Not really. I mean outside of hardcore and metal, I only listen to a few bands. And I feel like those few bands are the only ones that rub off on me.

**Daryl:** What are those few bands?

**Tony:** Well, I like Teenage Fan Club a lot. Just normal shit, like Thin Lizzy. I feel like The Owens always just had a Beatles and Black Sabbath influence. Just obvious stuff.

**Daryl:** There's nothing obscure about The Beatles or Black Sabbath.

**Tony:** Exactly. Just normal-ass stuff.

**Daryl:** How was it opening up for Fucked Up on their West Coast tour? That has to be pretty different shows than you're used to playing.

**Tony:** It was sick. They did two tours. First, they went out with Power Trip and Terror and I feel like those shows hit the bigger towns and probably had a lot more people. And then the leg we did with them were smaller shows.

**Daryl:** Did the audience react well?

**Tony:** I don't really know. The whole thing is kind of a blur. We had ten of our friends with us, and we were just partying the whole time. And, to be honest, I didn't even pay attention to if people were into us or not. But, we did sell a bunch of merch every night so...

**Daryl:** Well, that's a good sign.

**Tony:** I guess some people were paying attention.

**Daryl:** Was it weird finding yourself at these commercial venues every night?

**Tony:** I mean, it was cool. There was usually a green room with free beer and stuff.

**Daryl:** Yeah, that's pretty cool.

**Tony:** We did play at this venue that the DJ from House Of Pain and Limp Bizkit owns.

**Daryl:** [laughs] What?

**Tony:** Yeah, it was crazy.

**Daryl:** This is a good transition into another question I have. Can you articulate your love for rap metal?

**Tony:** [laughs] I don't know, man. I just like the groove of that stuff.

**Daryl:** The heavy groove?

**Tony:** Yeah! I like groove-oriented music. That's why I love E Town. Downset is cool.

**Daryl:** Alright, Guided By Voices or E Town Concrete?

**Tony:** I can't have one without the other.

**Daryl:** Neil Young or Pantera?

**Tony:** What?! Come on. I love both, but I gotta say Neil Young. But that sucks 'cause now I feel like I'm hating on Pantera. Pantera is one of my favorite bands, but Neil Young made my second favorite album of all time.

**Daryl:** I gave you these choices because I feel like you have a leaning towards heart-breakingly earnest music, or just "straight-up ignorant riffs."

**Tony:** Yeah. Well, Pantera fans listen to Neil Young, too. It just depends on what you're in the mood for.

**Daryl:** Is that true?

**Tony:** I think so. I mean, who doesn't like Neil Young? And who doesn't like Pantera?

**Daryl:** [laughs] Well, how would you describe your relationship with more traditional punk? Like Dead Kennedys, Ramones, Avengers...

**Tony:** I'm not into the Dead Kennedys.

**Daryl:** Why?

**Tony:** I don't like them. I loved them when I was in middle school though. I don't like it now.

**Daryl:** Alright, well what about the Ramones?

**Tony:** I love the Ramones, they're one of my favorite bands.

**Daryl:** Have you ever met a juggalo?

**Tony:** Yeah man, I grew up in San Mateo County. Hanging out in San Bruno, one of my best friends in seventh grade was a juggalo.

**Daryl:** Did you ever feel the desire to join "the family"?

**Tony:** I don't know, man. I don't think it's my look.

**Daryl:** What do you have to do for a living?

**Tony:** You know what I do for a fucking living. I just had my ten-year anniversary at the Vogue.

**Daryl:** What is that?

**Tony:** Oh, it's a movie theater. Will (Riisk Records, This Is My Fist) got me a job here when I was eighteen years old.

**Daryl:** It allows you to do music stuff though?

**Tony:** Yeah. They're pretty good about that.

**Daryl:** Can you describe the Bay Area punk scene that you grew up in?

**Tony:** Yeah, on one hand it's great because the people are really accepting. And I've made a lot of friends over the years through the punk scene, or whatever. Musically speaking, I've always felt a little bit alienated from it. I'm just into different stuff and so are most of my good friends. The types of hardcore I'm into, there isn't that much of that style as you would think in that scene. The Bay has its own hardcore sound, you know?

**Daryl:** Yeah.

**Tony:** Like the Prank Records type sound. And then the other side of the Bay Area is like, pop punk. Mission Records type stuff. I went to a lot of those shows, and some of my best friends were always into that scene. It was fun as a teenager but, strictly musically speaking, I've never been able to really get into it. It isn't my look.

**Daryl:** Are there other cities you feel like you relate to more?

**Tony:** I like the punk scene here, 'cause it's the people that make it. But a town like Boston has more bands that I like. But that doesn't mean that I want to live in Boston. I've never even been there.

**Daryl:** In your band Caged Animal, you play a style of hardcore that you want to hear?

**Tony:** Totally! We were just like, "We should start a band that plays the kind of hardcore that we like."

**Daryl:** And you were pretty well accepted in the Bay Area.

**Tony:** Absolutely.

**Daryl:** What was the first tour that you went on?

**Tony:** It was with Abi Yoyos and Sharp Knife. Up the West Coast.

**Daryl:** What year was that?

**Tony:** 2003.

**Daryl:** Ten years later, how do you tour differently now than you did when you were eighteen or nineteen?

**Tony:** Basically, now I'll only do it if it's worth it for me to do it.

**Daryl:** How so?

**Tony:** Like if the shows are sick and we don't have to worry about gas money. And if I can get the time off work. Back then, it didn't really matter; the idea of just going on tour was fun. But I don't really think that shit is all that fun now. [laughs]

**Daryl:** The Owens didn't really tour all that much.

**Tony:** Nope.

**Daryl:** Was that because it didn't seem worth it?

**Tony:** We didn't have any albums out. If we were gonna go outta town we'd just go up to Seattle because that's where a bunch of our friends lived. We went to New York one time 'cause Grass Widow asked us to. We played South By Southwest. That was fun.

**Daryl:** How so?

**Tony:** We played the Aquarius Records showcase. Mayyors played.

**Daryl:** What's something that happened on those early tours that still sticks with you?

**Tony:** I don't know. In '03 I was smoking hella weed. No one in Sharp Knife besides Jackson smoked weed. We were in Portland and I was trying to smoke. Morgan had these two crackhead neighbors who were wearing Venom shirts and came over for the show. Morgan was like, "Tony, don't smoke weed with those guys." But I did, and ended up accidentally smoking PCP. I lost my shit and everyone found me in the backyard puking and screaming that I was dying. The whole crew drove me to the hospital, but I came around by the time I got there. Didn't even make it past the waiting room. Felt fine, went back to Morgan's house and watched movies like nothing even happened.

**Daryl:** Why did you stop doing reviews for *Maximum Rockroll*?

**Tony:** 'Cause I was really terrible at them!

**Daryl:** No, I would always go through and read yours first.

**Tony:** Yeah, I mean, everyone who knows me loved it. But I would just hear things like, "Why does this guy come off like a bro?" A couple people at the house told me that they were straight-up bad. And the thing is that I'm not really interested in writing reviews. I just did it because I wanted to help out. They're always looking for people to help out, and I like the people a lot. I stuck around because they're my friends, but I just realized that I'm not really helping by writing terrible reviews of shitty-ass records. [laughs]

**Daryl:** How do you feel like your perception of punk has changed over the years?

**Tony:** I don't know, I don't really like punk. [laughs] I just like records, and

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I just look for whatever  
vibe is in the music that  
I can pick up on.

I don't really think of punk outside of records that I like. I've never identified as a punk. I think it rules, 'cause it's some of my favorite music, but I don't know what to say about punk.

**Daryl:** This is something I've always assumed, but never asked you. The Bay Area seems like such a politicized punk scene.

**Tony:** Yeah.

**Daryl:** There's a lot of politics. Which can be really inspiring, but you don't embrace punk as personal thing.

**Tony:** Hell no.

**Daryl:** But when everyone around you is so politicized, how do you approach that?

**Tony:** That's good. I like to be around people

like that. People being into radical politics, I'm down with that.

**Daryl:** But you feel like that is a separate thing from punk?

**Tony:** It all fits in there but, for me, punk is just listening to the Cockney Rejects and drinking a beer. That's punk to me. Like what you're saying about it being a lifestyle and the politics involved, I'm down with all that shit, but I don't do it. I'm with it, but I don't do it myself.

**Daryl:** What do you find important in punk music—or in music in general?

**Tony:** It's just the vibe. There has to be a vibe there. If you're listening to the Cockney Rejects, or any punk band, you're

like, "this fucking rules." 'Cause it has the energy. And then you listen to Obituary and you think it rules 'cause it has the riff. And then you listen to someone like Gene Clark, and you think it rules 'cause the songs are hella beautiful sounding. I just look for whatever vibe is in the music that I can pick up on.

**Daryl:** Do you think you could ever find a substitute for music?

**Tony:** No, hell no. It's the only fucking thing I know about and care about.

# *Channeling chaos into music is tricky business.*

More often than not, chaos just begets chaos, and things collapse into a spiraling mess of broken bottles, broken strings, broken cymbals, and, occasionally, broken limbs. If you ever had the misfortune of witnessing the Replacements at their *most* drunk and chaotic, the results were interesting but rarely of any musical value. But when the chaos became channeled in productive ways, it was sight to behold: a juggernaut of concentrated punk beauty. I can't help comparing the Dopamines to the Replacements, mainly because the Dopamines often out-Replacement the Replacements for making beautiful musical mayhem. When the Dopamines hit the stage, it is not uncommon for a dozen cups of beer to hit them. I doubt if they have ever played a show with all members sober.

And from chaos comes beauty.

It would be easy to stay on this superficial level of engagement with the Dopamines because their public persona of drunken tomfoolery is so massive and well-developed. But the truth is, these guys write some amazing fucking songs. Complex and complicated tunes and lyrics, the musical output of the band continues to mature, even if the behavior of the band members doesn't.

Their third full-length album, *Vices* (2012, It's Alive Records) is one of the most insightful album about vices—from chemical to romantic—I think I have ever heard. Sometimes unfairly dismissed as yet another Midwestern pop punk band, the fact is that the Dopamines are becoming something akin to a national treasure on the level of D4 and the Replacements. Maybe that's just the whiskey talking, but I'm pretty sure I'll stand by those words in the morning.

We all say things we might regret later, so be warned that there may be a few such nuggets in this interview.

## *Interview by Kevin Dunn*

HAZORCAKE 64



# *The Dopamines*



# *Dopamines*

*Photos by Patrick Houdek  
Layout by Wells Tipley*





# The version of is shooting a

**Jon Lewis** – guitar, vocals  
**Jon Weiner** – bass, vocals  
**Michael Dickson** – drums  
**Mikey Erg** – second guitar (in absentia)

**Jon Weiner:** What I was telling you before was that we attempted a Razorcake interview two or three years ago, with our friend Ryan Gelatin from Dayton. We got so fucking wasted that none of it was usable.

**Michael Dickson:** It was just incoherent.

**Jon Weiner:** It was all incoherent gibberish. I think we kept making fun of Paddy Costello (Dillinger Four, Arrivals). I don't remember what we were talking about.

**Jon Lewis:** We were eating corn and you were wearing a Batman mask.

**Jon Weiner:** We were eating a bunch of corn. It was fucking awesome. But the audio will be unearthed someday.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, this band turned seven this year. It's just weird that we've never had a Razorcake interview in seven years.

**Kevin:** We'll see if we can make this work. I heard a story that you guys played and some juggalos showed up and shot up the joint and stabbed people. Is that true?

**Jon Lewis:** All those things happened.

**Michael:** It's not as malicious as you make it sound but, yeah, it all happened. [laughter]

**Kevin:** What's the nice version of that?

**Jon Weiner:** It was pretty fucking malicious!

**Michael:** It was some hell, yeah!

**Jon Weiner:** They shot a gun off. Well,

here's the thing, is the juggalos thought we were fucking awesome.

**Michael:** Yeah, they were our best buds. They bought merch and T-shirts, and they were the best.

**Jon Weiner:** We were down with the clown at that point.

**Jon Lewis:** So, the short version is that all the juggalos got wasted. They were hanging out in this spot, hanging out in this house, Thirteenth House.

**Jon Weiner:** It needs to be on record that they thought we were some cool party dudes.

**Jon Lewis:** ...and Be My Doppelganger. Everyone was hanging out. I can't remember who was playing up in the living room, but what happened was—I think the drummer...

**Jon Weiner:** ...the juggalo was messing with his drum kit so he smacked him in the hand while he was playing. With his drumstick. Pretty kosher, normal punk shit.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah. So, what ended up happening was, the kid got shitty about it after it happened again or something. Then he pulled a knife out and he shanked a kid. I don't think he shanked the drummer,

**Michael:** It was some random kid trying to kick him out, I think.

**Jon Weiner:** Then they broke some windows.

**Jon Lewis:** Then the head juggalo went out into the backyard to call...

**Michael:** ...the alpha juggalo.

**Jon Lewis:** Yes, thank you. The alpha juggalo. [laughter] The alpha juggalo went

out into the backyard.

**Kevin:** He showed the juggalo signal up in the sky?

**Jon Lewis:** The version of the bat signal for juggalos is shooting a fucking 9mm into the ground.

**Jon Weiner:** He shot off the whole clip.

**Jon Lewis:** Emptied a whole clip into the ground and into the air, and then proceeded to use the gun to smash out windows out of every van in the driveway.

**Michael:** Including ours.

**Jon Weiner:** The story kind of changes. Meanwhile, it was me, you [to Jon L], and Laurie, we were loading gear. We were in the backyard where they started shooting the gun off, and we were down the driveway, loading our gear. We had just finished playing.

**Jon Lewis:** The driveway's pretty long.

**Jon Weiner:** I hear this "Doot doot doot doot." I'm like...

**Jon Lewis:** He thought it was fireworks.

**Jon Weiner:** I'm like, "What the fuck? That's, like, some prominent fireworks." We're loading gear, and all of a sudden everyone's screaming and running. It was Jon and the girl I was dating at the time, and I had this fight-or-flight sort of moment, I guess, like masculine stuff. You guys both got in the back of the van and you can't pull the door shut from the inside.

**Jon Lewis:** And there's no windows.

**Jon Weiner:** We had a bunk built in it, you know, a normal punk band setup. I locked

# of the bat signal for juggalos a fucking 9mm into the ground.

them into the back of it, and I dove into the side of the van. As soon as that happens, I see this pistol come up, and it's like, "Doot. Doot," and knocked the windows out of our van. I'm laying there and I grab a tire iron, and I basically wait to fight for my life.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, and then your girlfriend and I were covered by a bunk and metal. There's no windows. We had no idea what was going on. We heard glass shatter and we didn't know. I thought in that moment—of course Jon wasn't dead—but I thought, "Holy shit, he's going to die. Someone's going to die." It was absolutely terrifying.

**Michael:** Rad Company's van was there too, and they knocked out all their windows. They weren't trying to hurt anybody. Well, besides... [laughter]

**Kevin:** Besides the kid they shanked. [laughter]

**Michael:** The funniest part of the fucking story is, the cops show up... It was a keg party, and they used fucking party cups to mark over the bullet holes. There was all these crying fucking punks and stuff, like, upset. They're just like, "Ulp." They ended up finding the juggalos down the road, with the fucking gun... [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** And we were joking later that the kid was probably a rich kid who would get off, and sure enough we heard later that he was only charged with a concealed weapon. [laughter]

**Kevin:** Okay, that was clearly your best show. What has been your worst show? [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** They're both in Richmond, Virginia, the two worst nights of our band's existence.

**Jon Lewis:** I suffered more than anyone else. I'm going to tell this story.

**Jon Weiner:** It starts out with the pee, though.

**Jon Lewis:** We're on tour, and I made up this dumb nickname for myself called J Lew Chuckaroo because I felt like I was a pro at tossing open containers of pee out of a window. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** You piss in, like, a Jack in the Box cup.

**Jon Weiner:** Three people's pee. We all peed in a cup.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah. I would be driving and they would be like, "Lewis, throw it out the

window." I would be like, "Oh I am going to give it the old J Lew Chuckaroo," and just hammer it out the window, and it would never hit the van or anything. It wasn't a nickname anyone gave me. I just said that.

**Jon Weiner:** Self-proclaimed pee chucker. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Then it stuck because we were on our way to Richmond, Virginia. It was the first time we ever played Richmond, and we were on our way, and Michael pissed in it and then I pissed in it.

**Jon Weiner:** I was driving.

**Jon Lewis:** I am like, "I am going to give it the old J Lew Chuckaroo" but the window was only half way down [laughter]. So I went to throw the cup and it just slammed into the fucking window and just piss everywhere.

**Jon Weiner:** Literally everywhere. It covered the entire van.

**Jon Lewis:** The whole van was covered in piss.

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah, like hangover pee, like that dark yellow, smelly, dehydrated.

**Jon Weiner:** Real minerally piss.

**Jon Lewis:** I'm driving. I think we were just laughing.

**Michael:** Yeah. What can you do? We're covered in piss.

**Jon Lewis:** We get to the bar. It's a pool hall and we're playing with a metal band.

**Jon Weiner:** It's embarrassing. It was called like the Cue Ball or something.

**Jon Lewis:** Everyone who lives in Richmond knows the bar as the Pool Hall. So we get there and we're eating. I'm still blaming it on the macaroni and cheese bites. But we got there.

**Michael:** Those were some bad macaroni and cheese bites.

**Jon Lewis:** We played to like one person.

**Jon Weiner:** That dude was awesome!

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, the one dude was really excited for us to be there.

**Jon Weiner:** He was like, "Thanks for being here." And we got hammered with him.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, we got hammered in the van. We were drinking and shooting pool. Well, the front of this venue pool hall is all glass.

**Jon Weiner:** You could see our van parked in front of it.

**Jon Lewis:** You could see our van parked

right in front of the venue. Someone ran up to our van, broke the window, stole our GPS, and ran off.

**Jon Weiner:** Which was the FineDrive 200.

**Michael:** It was the first GPS ever made. It was horrible. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Every time you drove on the highway it would always say you were off road somewhere... [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Like in a lake or a ditch.

**Jon Lewis:** So, someone broke in full view of everyone. Whoever saw it was like, "I am not dealing with that shit."

**Michael:** The twenty dollar window cost more than the GPS.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, it cost more to replace the window than the fucking GPS. That happened. We had to cardboard that shit up.

**Michael:** We kept joking though because we hadn't cleaned up the pee and the guy was probably like rummaging through the pee.

**Jon Lewis:** Rummaging through, just touching our piss. [laughter] Then we got done playing, and I just started feeling a little sketchy. I was just feeling a little off. The night was going on, but then I started feeling really bad. I was just sitting outside trying to work it off or just drink it off, whatever. Then it became very clear that I was getting very sick very fast, like stomach nausea, like something was going down.

**Michael:** Mac and cheese bites.

**Jon Lewis:** Mac and cheese bites from the old pool hall. We were supposed to play a show the next day and we just ended up canceling it because I am like, "We've got to drive home. This is some serious shit. I'm fucked. I'm fucked."

**Michael:** We cancelled our last show.

Which was the only show we ever cancelled besides when we decided to stay in a hotel water park all day. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** We had a show that Jesse Thorston booked for us. Instead, we met this awesome guy in Iowa and he hooked us up at this like...

**Michael:** ...with pills and weed. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah. He had these drugs, like painkillers and weed, and then went to a water park hotel and just cancelled our show that night. [laughter]

**Michael:** It was in Fargo.

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah. Sorry, Fargo.

**Jon Lewis:** That was the only other show we ever cancelled. Then back to Richmond. We're driving home and I am like, "We've got to drive home tonight," because I was seriously fucked. We drive a little ways and then we had to pull over, because I had to go shit in the woods. [laughs] I was just spraying shit out of my asshole. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** You were like crying.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah.

**Jon Weiner:** It was horrible. It was violent.

**Jon Lewis:** It was bad. I got violently ill. I am like, "We've got to get to a hotel room. I can't make it all night." They went to get a hotel room, and you guys weren't around, but I threw up on an evergreen that was just sprouted from the ground. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Remember? It was a whole construction site. It was like everything was being leveled, and there was this one little evergreen that had just brought itself out into the world. I just picked that spot and threw up on it. Then we are all sleeping, and I make it through most of the night. I woke up a little early and I'm like, "I'm going to take a shower. My asshole is all chapped." [laughing] I only threw up the once, and after that it was just shit. I took a shower and I was fine. I was one foot out of the shower, and I was like, "Oh, I've got to fart." I went to fart, and just sprayed diarrhea all over the bathroom floor. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Water poop. Brown rain!

**Jon Lewis:** Just water shit all over. In that moment, I run to the toilet, and I'm fucking spraying water out of my ass, and I'm just staring at all of this shit on the floor. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** I look in and there's this white towel that's just completely covered in wet shit.

**Jon Lewis:** I just took towels. I was sitting there, just a fountain of water out of my ass, a torrent of shit. I'm just wiping up water from the shower, from my feet, all over the tile, watery shit with all of these towels, and put them in a corner of the bathroom. Then the drive home was a little longer, because we had to pull over once every hour. It was every half hour, then every hour, then an hour and a half.

**Jon Weiner:** After we got back into our piss-covered, cardboard-windowed, 1984 E-150. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Me curled up into a ball. The worst part was—the warning signal that we've got to pull over—is my asshole would involuntarily pucker. [laughter] It would just start flexing. It's almost like dry heaving, when you have food poisoning. Even if you have nothing in your stomach, your body just

forces you to dry heave. My asshole was just making little kissy faces. [laughter] It was bad. It was rough. That was our worst show ever.

**Kevin:** Do you want to tell the story of kissing the girl you thought was a guy? [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Okay, look! First off, she was an ironing board. She had no boobs. [laughter] We'll go back to the beginning. The short version is we got really fucking drunk. This is our second time in Richmond. We played Stay Sweet Fest, the first one, right? It was the drunkest we've ever played collectively as a band.

**Kevin:** Shit, that is a pretty monumental statement.

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah, because that is supposedly our thing.

**Jon Lewis:** Dude, it was bad! We get drunk, but this was like...

**Jon Weiner:** My friends kept hiding our gear. Somebody kept moving my bass head, and they'd ask, "Where's your bass head?" and I was like "Uhhhhhh, I dunno!"

**Jon Lewis:** We were all way too drunk. I was changing strings onstage before we started playing, and I went to cut the excess off. I just cut my new strings off my guitar. [laughter] Just completely, baby-drunk. Infant, crib death drunk. We're all wasted. We're playing a song and then I started kissing Jon. We started making out. Then I grabbed a dude in the crowd and kissed him. This big, wild '80s hair, black hair, and a black shirt. I remember who it was. Then, after it happened, it was over. Then Mickey (Mocnik of New Creases) gave me this weird look, and in my drunken state I caught it. We just kept playing, and then it dawned on me that the person I kissed was actually a girl. I felt really bad, because who does that? That's like something Billie Joe Armstrong would do at a Green Day arena show. [laughter] It was really embarrassing. I was wasted. After the set was over, I ran up to her and I was like, "I am so sorry." I apologized over and over.

**Kevin:** "I am so sorry. I thought you were a dude." [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** I did! I was drunk, I just was saying that to her over and over again. I was so fucking embarrassed. She looked like—what's his name from Guns N Roses? [laughs]

**Kevin:** Slash?

**Jon Lewis:** No, I wished she looked like Slash. [laughter] She looked like that one dude from fucking Poison. Poison, not Guns N Roses.

**Michael:** Brett Michaels? [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** The point is, I would never just grab a girl out in the crowd and fucking kiss her.

**Jon Weiner:** Whatever, you sexist pig. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** It was so weird. Anyway, that's less funny than the last story. It was probably the most embarrassed I've ever been.

**Jon Weiner:** Evan from Vacation finished that set on bass.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, he finished the set on bass, because Jon was just done. [laughter] We played right before the headliners, the Menzingers, who are really just a great band.

**Jon Weiner:** We were walking around, grabbing all their dicks and stuff. [laughter]

**Michael:** We made them look so much better. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** We did. That's the most disappointed I've ever been in a set we've played. But people thought it was hilarious.

**Kevin:** Did you play with them again?

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah, we have. We're buds.

**Kevin:** You guys have a reputation for the drunken shit being thrown at you. Do you actually have medical bills for stuff thrown at you?

**Michael:** Jon [Weiner] hurt himself when he was crowd surfing for D4 once. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** [laughs] Yeah, that was so awesome. You're going to tell the story but you don't remember it.

**Jon Weiner:** I don't even want to fucking read this. It's just embarrassing shit. All right, Dillinger Four played Insubordination Fest in Baltimore. We had just become pretty good buds with them and, long story short, I was hanging out with Paddy and Billy backstage, and that's like the last thing I remember. Apparently, in the middle of their set, I just came from backstage and stumbled on—and this is like a thousand person show.

**Jon Lewis:** A couple thousand people were watching from the floor. It's a big stage.

**Jon Weiner:** Just stumble, like T-Rex hands, into the middle of the stage. [laughter] I don't know if they stopped playing or if it was after the song they played.

**Jon Lewis:** It was after the song was over.

**Jon Weiner:** They start making fun of me, and then I...

**Jon Lewis:** You pulled your pants down. You tried to, but you couldn't. You tried to pull your pants down, and they wouldn't pull down. You were trying to moon the crowd, and he couldn't do it. You could not get your pants off. It was just me trying to pull you off that stage. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** I'm a different person since this, keep in mind.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, I know. But you were drunk. You had no clue what was going on.

**Jon Weiner:** I took my shirt off. In my mind, I'm like the coolest dude in the world right now. I'm watching my favorite band,

*Just piss everywhere. Literally ever!*



I'm on stage. But in reality, I was just this embarrassing, fat douchebag. [laughter] I took my shirt off and went to stage dive, like this epic stage dive in my head.

**Michael:** You stage walked. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** It was a big pro show. There was a twenty-foot barricade. I just flop onto the fucking barricade, like this fucking dead fish, and just wrecked myself. I split my shin and my entire leg, I guess, landed on the railing. It was just purple. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Dude, and who pooped on the van? [laughter] Remember, you had to wipe shit off the van. There was shit all over our van at Insubordination Fest. It was that night.

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jon Lewis:** Bunnz, the drummer of the Jetty Boys. What happened was he shit next to our van when we weren't around it, he picked up the shit, and he finger-painted a big cock on the side of our van with shit. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** It was there for years.

**Jon Lewis:** Jon retaliated by having just the most chunky, chipotle diarrhea all over their windshield. He stood up on top of their van and shit all over. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** There was like a hundred people that surrounded it. I shit on their fucking windshield, took my socks off, wiped my ass, and stuck them under their wiper blades. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, and so then what happened was Jon ended up getting the fucking old granddad drunk, and the D4 fucking barricade thing happened. The next morning, his girlfriend was just livid about how there was just this shit all over the van. They were outside with a Windex bottle, cleaning up shit off the van, gagging. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Like, Dillinger 4 hung over, cleaning a shit...

**Jon Lewis:** It's like Minneapolis-proper hangover in Baltimore, because that's what happens when you hang out with anyone from Dillinger Four. You end up making the biggest mistake of your life. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** When we played with them in Covington and you passed out behind the dumpster.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, and I threw up all over the place. I crawled out from behind the dumpster, old fucking D4 drunk.

**Jon Weiner:** All these stories are like four to six years ago, though. We're a little more...

**Jon Lewis:** We're a little more subdued.

**Kevin:** Are you a little more subdued? [to Jon Lewis] Because you've got a kid?

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah.

**Jon Weiner:** We're all pretty chill these days. But Jon actually just showed me his kid's asshole. [laughter]



*everywhere. It covered the entire van.*

**Jon Lewis:** We were all in the hotel and he was changing the bass strings on the bed, and my kid took a shit, so we had to change the diaper. My wife and I are tag-teaming, changing the diaper. I'm like "Hey, Jon!" I turned my kid over, and start cranking his cheeks open.

**Jon Weiner:** Melinda's like "Jon, what are you doing?"

**Jon Lewis:** I was trying to save the shit in the diaper, so I could show Jon, put it in his face while he's changing his strings. Yeah, I guess it's more subdued. [laughter] It's more subdued in that I do drink way less and way less crazy shit happens. We're just not as active as a band, so this type of shit happens when we're on tour, and years ago. It's more of a tour thing that happens. But nowadays, just me, out of the three of us, I definitely drink way less, and I've got this kid, but nothing's really changed as far as, you know, I still find an opportunity to show my kid's asshole to Jon and Michael.

**Jon Weiner:** I drink as a career,

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah, he's a bartender in a fucking dope-ass bar in Cincinnati.

outside of Neon's at five in the morning?

**Michael:** Do I remember this?

**Jon Weiner:** You were arrested naked.

**Michael:** [laughs] Oh, yeah.

**Jon Weiner:** Quote, unquote from Michael: "I remember being in the back of a cop car with my dick out."

**Michael:** Oh, yeah. The cops found me with no pants. I was naked from the waist down, and they just took me home. I got a ticket, and that was about it. They were lovely people. They were very nice. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** It was apparently four or five AM, and you were just passed out in front of a bar.

**Michael:** No, I was walking around. [laughter] I was walking around with my dick out, fucking T-Rex arms.

**Jon Lewis:** Singing Morrissey songs?

**Michael:** Who knows? I just remember that I showed up at my house with my hoodie pulled down over myself. I was wearing a hoodie; that was it.

**Kevin:** Do you remember how you got in that state?

because you got a career if you're going to become an architect?

**Jon Lewis:** It's definitely hard to get off.

**Jon Weiner:** We are working tomorrow.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah. I'm working tomorrow. I'm doing a little work on the side tomorrow. It is hard, because now I'm finally locked down to two weeks a year. It's the first time it's happened since we've been a band. I've been doing the architecture thing for two years now, but it's a long, stupid story. I would just take off whenever I wanted. When I came back, if they had work, I would do it.

**Jon Weiner:** We have opposite schedules. You're in the day. I'm at night.

**Kevin:** How do you guys practice?

**Jon Weiner:** We don't. [laughter] We haven't in a year.

**Kevin:** That will be evident tonight, right? [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** I think we'll be alright tonight. We practiced a week ago. We played a show. I was trying to find Josh to bring him out here. Josh is our new fill-in. We write and record as a three-piece, mainly, and then we

# Infant, crib death

**Kevin:** Yeah, isn't it like a prohibition-themed bar?

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah, it's like a little, fancy, old-time cocktail bar, but it's not snobby and expensive. It's just kind of fun.

**Jon Lewis:** Jon wears vests and ties and muddles mint, while wearing a fucking conductor hat.

**Jon Weiner:** I'm essentially just an aging hipster in northside Cincinnati.

**Kevin:** [to Jon Lewis] You're an architect, right?

**Jon Lewis:** I'm an engineer. I'm not an architect yet. I've got to take some test. But yeah, I do work in architecture for a living. I've been doing that forever.

**Jon Weiner:** Michael lifts rocks and goes to prison and shit. [laughter]

**Kevin:** Michael, what are you doing?

**Michael:** Basically what he said. I work for a landscaping company and I'm collecting DUIs, apparently.

**Jon Lewis:** He's got a Michael Dixon rookie card DUI.

**Michael:** Apparently, if you sleep in your car when you're drunk, you just get DUIs.

**Jon Weiner:** Michael's a true, blue-collar American of Dopamines.

**Jon Lewis:** Can we tell a story about what happened two weeks before that happened,

**Michael:** I have no clue.

**Jon Lewis:** Then construction workers found your phone the next day eight blocks away.

**Jon Weiner:** They called your mom.

**Michael:** Yeah, some guy found my phone, my glasses, and just gave them to my mom. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Ah, I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall. Yeah, that's what we do for a living. That's what we all do.

**Kevin:** How long ago was that?

**Michael:** A year and half.

**Kevin:** Okay. You guys are much more subdued, right? [laughter]

**Michael:** Much more.

**Jon Weiner:** I mean, the other night I got his dick out and licked it while he was passed out on my couch. [laughter]

**Kevin:** That's beautiful.

**Jon Lewis:** I've got a picture of it. Do you want to see a picture of it?

**Michael:** There's documented evidence.

**Jon Weiner:** I don't know. Every now and then you've just got to freak out your friends, you know?

**Jon Lewis:** We still get down and do weird shit.

**Michael:** We're still party dudes.

**Jon Lewis:** But I party once a month now instead of once a week.

**Kevin:** Is it hard to get off of work and stuff,

have Mikey Erg playing with us as a second guitarist. But now we have someone more local. He's Josh Goldman. He's in what, Rad Company?

**Michael:** Raging Nathans. And he's filling in for the Queers.

**Kevin:** Why do you feel like you need a second guitarist?

**Jon Lewis:** It just sounds full. The self-titled LP, the *Soap and Lampshades* EP and the Copyrights split were "one person playing guitar" kind of songs. Then when we did the *Expect the Worst*, it was octaves and little lead parts. There are some songs, especially on *Vices*, some songs don't sound good without two guitars now, because there are separate guitar parts happening together. It would be empty. It's just good and it sounds bigger. It just sounds full.

**Jon Weiner:** Basically, we're aging professional musicians is that what you're trying to say?

**Kevin:** Yeah. How does one get Mikey Erg into a band? Do I just call you up and say, "Guess what? I'm in your band this month."

**Jon Weiner:** He runs out of money for fucking chicken nuggets. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** He starts panhandling this, "Will play a little guitar for money, a little guitar for food."



**Jon Weiner:** Actually, I do want to go on record that we were the first band that he joined after The Ergs. Everyone is always like, "Mikey is in every band." Well, we were the first ones. Fuck those people. Also, he does that shit for a living. It's all he's got. Fuck the haters who say, "Oh, he's in so many bands." Yeah. That's what he chose to do with his life.

**Michael:** And he's fucking good at it.

**Kevin:** He's fucking awesome. How do you get him, because I want him in my band? [laughter] Did he call you guys up or did you guys know him?

**Jon Weiner:** We've been buds for a long time from shows over the years. He joined really early in the band.

**Jon Lewis:** It was after our first tour. We had been buds and we talked about how we needed a second guitarist and he was like, "Well, I'm willing to travel all the time and I just need something to do when I am not doing anything."

**Jon Weiner:** That way he plays with bands that actually make money. [laughter] We all had a little spark here like, "Let's do it." I realized that he's been in the band for five years now.

**Jon Lewis:** He's been in the band not quite as long as Michael has.

**Kevin:** Do you think of him as part of the band even though he's not a part of the recording side?

**Jon Weiner:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Jon Lewis:** We've talked about him actually doing the next record with us.

**Jon Weiner:** We need to drag him to Cincinnati for a couple of weeks just to iron out all the new material that's been coming out.

**Kevin:** Do you think you guys are becoming better musicians...

**Everyone in unison:** No. [laughter]

**Kevin:** Because you're talking about octaves and lead parts.

**Jon Weiner:** We definitely have come a long way.

**Jon Lewis:** I think Jon is definitely a better bassist, a more technical bassist. I'm still more about writing songs than technical shit. I'm more about writing a catchy song, and however that has to come together technically is just make it work when I have to make it work.

**Jon Weiner:** I think you've become a better drummer over the last two tours.

**Jon Lewis:** Michael has definitely gotten worse. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Michael always hits that shit hard. That's all you need.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah. Michael hits them really hard and fucking throws in the good shit when the good shit needs to be there. Like on all the *Vices* stuff.

**Kevin:** *Vices* is a great album, but, for me, it's interesting because it's your album least about vices. I don't think it makes any sense, but with the early albums it's like "Party fucking drunk," and then *Vices* is much more mature...

**Jon Lewis:** It's more about "nah." It's more about coming down from all those vices.

**Jon Weiner:** It's kind of a break-up, come-down, bummed record, I guess. The attitude of that record is like a big sigh, I think.

**Kevin:** There are a lot of references to falling on that.

**Jon Lewis:** Yeah. That's kind of weird. [laughs] I haven't thought about that.

**Jon Weiner:** Wow, you've actually listened to it. That's cool. I don't even know everything that Jon has written, but the next one will be probably a complete adult record.

**Kevin:** What is an adult record?

**Jon Lewis:** Very angry.

**Jon Weiner:** It's not about chugging a beer. We'll always still be a party band, I guess, but we wanted to get away from the stigma a little bit. We write songs that mean a lot to us.



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**Jon Lewis:** Aren't those the famous last words of a band? It's always doomed to be a bad record. [laughs] I know all that I've started writing so far are very angry and reflective of having a child, and that balance of finally committing to a career instead of doing half and half. It was music-half and career-half, and now it's very strange.

**Kevin:** Now you're really angry.

**Jon Lewis:** I'm locked down to fucking two weeks a year to vacation.

**Jon Weiner:** I don't think you're angry about it, though.

**Jon Lewis:** Not angry, but the songs come off very angry. I'm more excited about what's going to come with all this new material however it gets worked out, because lyrically and melodically I know it's fine.

**Jon Weiner:** The next record will be called *Slaves to the Man*.

**Kevin:** *Slaves to the Baby*. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** It's going to be called fucking *Check Out That Little Kid's Asshole*. [laughter] My kid is the shit, for the record. He's super awesome. My wife and I are much closer because of him, which is awesome.

**Kevin:** How long have you guys been married?

**Jon Lewis:** We've been married for coming on three years. We've been together for almost ten. It was 2004. We've been together for a long time. We've always been close, but the kid, for some reason, we fuck more. [laughter]

**Kevin:** So much for that whole myth of getting married and not having sex.

**Jon Weiner:** I just lick Michael's dick when we're on the road. [laughter]

**Kevin:** And you just walk around with your pants off.

**Michael:** I do that sometimes. It's involuntary at this point.

**Jon Lewis:** After so many years of being together you think you'd spice it up a little bit, and we do in a big, bad way. However, my wife will not let me lick her asshole. [laughter] I've tried. It's not that far. It's not that far of a distance to travel.

**Kevin:** She's always being vigilant.

**Jon Weiner:** She's going to be stoked to read that. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** I've never done it. I don't even know if I would like eating an asshole out. It might taste brown. I don't know. I might

get a heavy brown note. I don't know why I just said that.

**Kevin:** I don't know either, man. But anyway, talking about eating assholes. The Copyrights split *Songs about Fucking Up*. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** They suck the dicks and they play the songs. [laughter] That's another story.

**Kevin:** How did the split with them come about?

**Jon Lewis:** Everyone always talked about how we sound exactly like The Copyrights, but we actually sound nothing like The Copyrights. We have completely different songs.

**Kevin:** Well, you both have bass, guitar, and drums and male vocals.

**Jon Lewis:** We probably have some older stuff that is sort of like them, and they are definitely an influence on us.

**Jon Weiner:** We started the band because we were super stoked about the Ergs and the Copyrights, Teenage Bottle Rocket. We thought those bands were cool. We were like, "Oh, we should do a pop punk band. It will be fun."

**Jon Lewis:** There is this old demo of "Cupidity" where I tried to sound like Ray



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and that's how I wanted to sing in The Dopamines. It'll end up on the Internet, eventually. It is so fucking embarrassing. It's so bad.

**Jon Weiner:** We were all in different punk and hardcore bands. Then we decided "Oh, let's do a pop punk band. We'll play basements and it'll be a party." Yeah, so The Copyright's split. We were both talking about how funny it is that everyone always beat us against the wall, Todd Taylor being one of them. Todd Taylor said that the Copyrights created a crater, and we're just observing the crater.

**Jon Lewis:** We're in the crater.

**Jon Weiner:** Maybe that's why it's taken seven years for us to score a Razorcake interview. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** There's another way that we ended up with The Copyrights. This is all hearsay, but I feel like I've heard it from the mouth of a Copyright. This is such a testament to the Dopamines and how we get involved in shit. This is totally a fucking rumor. There might have been a little bit of talk about NOFX and The Copyrights doing a split together a long time ago. What happened is, I'm not sure if the NOFX part is true, but I know the next part I'm about to tell is true. But I guess it was taking too long for the commitment to happen, for NOFX to pull off some B sides or some shit. Then that didn't go down so then they were going to do this split with the Ergs—that is a fact. It was supposed to be an Ergs/Copyright split. Then Ergs broke up, and they didn't have songs so then we were the third band in

line. And they were like, "Alright, we'll do it with the Dopamines." [laughter] It's not that funny, but it's the proverbial sigh.

**Jon Weiner:** Our band is one big sigh.

**Jon Lewis:** We've always been very lucky. We've always been like the drunk person who throws someone's expensive Tiffany lamp shade over your head at a party but they're still okay that you're there. [laughter]

**Jon Weiner:** Actually, I was telling someone this recently. The only reason why we've done anything is because we are just good at being buds with people. We do a lot of shows and people just end up owing us favors.

**Kevin:** Whose idea was it to do the Big Black cover art?

**Michael:** That was originally a Copyrights idea.

**Jon Weiner:** (Adam) Fletcher really wanted to do that. We were talking about what the cover should be and they're like, "What about [Jeff] Funburg bending you over?" We're like, "Sounds awesome." It's probably one of my favorite (pieces of artwork)artwork. It's a good one.

**Kevin:** Why do you still do this after seven years?

**Michael:** Free vacation is pretty cool.

**Jon Weiner:** Definitely, for better or worse, it's my identity. I mean it's the most beautiful fucking friendships we've made with people all over the world.

**Michael:** With people we wouldn't see otherwise if we didn't come do the shows.

**Jon Lewis:** That's what everybody says and it might sound cliché, but we meet the most

amazing people that we've become fucking awesome friends with.

**Jon Lewis:** It's always like a family reunion. The thing is we don't tour that much anymore. Or, at least in the past year, we haven't toured that much. If a festival comes up we're going to go out—because we're still relevant enough for some people to invite us to a festival—where we're going to see a lot of people who we only see a few times a year. There's no reason not to do it. It's not stressful to come out here for a weekend and hang out. Maybe break even, spending a little money on a bunch of beer, and hanging out with friends.

**Jon Weiner:** That's always been our attitude. We'll see how far we can take it, and how relevant we can stay.

**Kevin:** Any regrets so far?

**Jon Weiner:** No, I don't think so. Not at all, actually. We've never really done anything stupid as a band.

**Michael:** I've lost a couple of pair of pants I like, but no. No regrets. [laughter]

**Jon Lewis:** Definitely no regrets.

**Jon Weiner:** Can the tagline of our article be called, "Seven Years, Still Sounding Like the Copyrights"? [laughter]

[thedopamines.net](http://thedopamines.net)



# TOP FIVES

## RAZORCAKE



### Alex Barrett

- *Woman Rebel*, by Peter Bagge
- Neighborhood Brats, *Total Dementia 7"*
- *Blue Spring* by Taiyo Matsumoto
- *Blow Out*, directed by Brian DePalma
- Red Dons, *Notes on the Underground 7"*

### Aphid Peewit

- SNFU, *Never Trouble Trouble Until Trouble Troubles You* CD
- Poison Idea, *Kings of Punk* (Bloated Edition) CD
- SNFU, *What No One Else Wanted to Say* by Chris Walter (book)
- In Defence, *Into the Sewer* reissue CD
- KFL: *Chaos Magic & the Band Who Burned a Million Pounds* by John Higgs (book)

### Art Ettinger

- Dodge Dart, *Lock Your Medicine Cabinet, It's Dodge Dart* CD
- Toys That Kill, *Jukebox Series 7"*
- The Lawrence Arms, *Metropole* LP
- White Murder, Self-titled LP
- Alan King And The Beer Drinking Christians, Self-titled CD

### Ben Snakepit

- Top 5 Fancy Beers*
1. 5 Stones Aloha Piña
  2. Austin Beerworks Black Thunder
  3. Independence Convict Hill Oatmeal Stout
  4. Dogfish Head Indian Brown Ale
  5. Stone Smoked Porter

### Bianca Barragan

1. Wulfen Rag, *Wreck Of The Zephyr*, and *Summer Vacation at the Wulf Den*
2. *Broad City* on Comedy Central
3. White Murder's debut album
4. LA Zine Fest 2014
5. The LA Zine Week "We Are in Friend-Love with You" reading at & Pens Press

### Bill Pinkel

- Top 5 Records I Missed That I'm Listening to Now*
- Audacity, *Mellow Cruisers*
  - Blind Shake, *Key to a False Door*
  - The Estranged, *Subliminal Man*
  - Rough Kids, *The State I'm In*
  - Neighborhood Brats, *No Sun, No Tan*

### Billy Kostka

- The Hunches, *Exit Dreams*
- Cheater Slicks, *Reality Is a Grape*
- Autistic Youth, *Nonage*
- Greg Cartwright, *Live at the Circle A*
- Basic Cable, *I'm Good to Drive*

### Caitlin Hoffman

*Top Five Songs I've Heard on the Radio at Work*

1. "London Calling" The Clash
2. "Blitzkrieg Bop" The Ramones
3. "Here for a Good Time" Trooper
4. "All The Young Dudes" Mott The Hoople
5. "American Woman" The Guess Who

### Camille Reynolds

*New Favorite Places/Things*

- Life Stink LP
- Hysterics, *Can't I Live? 7"*
- Nots 7"
- Death Hymn Number 9, *3rd Degree Moon Burns* LP
- My new hometown (worth the hell of moving)

### Cassie Sneider

*Top Five Songs I Want Played at My Funeral*

1. "Death of a Clown" by the Kinks
2. "Tears of a Clown" by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles
3. "Cathy's Clown" by the Everly Brothers
4. "Clown" by Argent
5. "Clowny Clown Clown" by Crispin Glover

### Chad Williams

*Top 5 of 2013 Because I Missed the Top 10 Request*

1. Criminal Damage, *Call of Death* LP
2. Night Birds, *Born to Die in Suburbia* LP
3. The Bronx, *The Bronx (IV)* LP
4. Holier Than Thou?, *You Can't Have Slaughter without Laughter 12"*
5. Bl'ast!, *Blood!* LP

### Chris Terry

1. Atrina, *In Planetary Sugar* LP
2. The Franceens, *Stepford Smiles* CD
3. Blood Orange, *Cupid Deluxe* LP
4. *Don't Start Me Talkin'* by Tom Williams (novel)
5. Zero Fade made the American Library Association's YALSA BFYA list.

### Craven Rock

1. Release of my book *Nights and Days in a Dark Carnival: Time Spent with Juggalos* on Mend My Dress Press!
2. National Wake, *Walk in Africa 1979-81* LP
3. *Optogram #1: Small Town Story* by Danielle Patrick (zine)
4. Modern Life Is War, *Fever Hunting*
5. *Kumare* (movie)

### Designated Dale

*Top 5 Things He's Fucking Thankful for (Except for Being Unable to Turn in a Column for the First Time, EVER)*

1. Dr. Fawaz Kaba, the corneal specialist who saved my right eye this past January.
2. The post-op nursing staff who didn't take my extremely violent awakening from anesthesia personally.
3. My ma and ma-in-law, brothermen Art, Jeff, Todd, David, and Jai for helping me out and always having my back during life's occasional shitstorms, such as these.
4. Computer / electronic equipment that play back music, audio books, and movies.
5. And last, but most certainly not least, my continuing-to-amaze-me wife Yvonne. If life is a burrito, she is definitely the top shelf tortilla that keeps everything together and safe, and I love her beyond words for that.

### Daryl Gussin

- Acid Fast, *Rabid Moon* LP
- Criminal Code, *No Device* LP
- White Murder, Self-titled LP
- Rev. Beat-man, live at Cafe NELA
- DARTO!

### Evan Wolff

*Top 5 Bands / People I'm Stoked On*

1. Shellshag
2. Flykills
3. Nude Beach
4. Tenement
5. Philly homies

### Gabe Rock

- Mixtape #5*
1. The Clean, "Anything Could Happen"
  2. The Troggs, "I Can't Control Myself"
  3. Beach House, "Other People"
  4. Donovan, "Hurdy Gurdy Man"
  5. Beanuts feat. Big Pun, "Off the Books"

### George Rager

*We're Getting the Band Back Together! Top 5 Old Man Hardcore (OMHC) Reunion Bands*

1. Infest
2. Final Conflict
3. Bl'ast
4. Los Crudos (sorry, Martin)
5. Negative Approach

### Indiana Laub

- Horrible Things, *Dumb Days* CS
- Nana Grizol, "For Things That Haven't Come Yet"
- Joyce Manor, *Of All Things I Will Soon Grow Tired* LP
- Little Things, *Frantic, Forgetful* CS
- Run Forever, *A Few Good Things* EP

### Jamie Rotante

*Top 5 Names I Would Choose If I Were a Member of the Dwarves*

1. Gina Dentata
2. Kelly Ripper
3. Whori Spelling
4. Mammary J. Blige
5. Mulva

### Jennifer Federico

*Top 5 Favorites from My Super-Cool Razorcake Punk Box!*

1. Fear Of Lipstick, Self-titled
2. Kim Phuc, *Copsucker*
3. The Reaction, *Right Now*
4. *Genetic Disorder* (zine)
5. *Roctober* (zine)

### Jim Joyce

*Five Things That Were Already Underlined in My Copy of Dee Dee Ramone's Autobiography, Poison Heart*

1. On being in a rehabilitation center: "That was fucked up. They also made me play volleyball. It was a nightmare."
2. On quitting the Ramones: "By then I was having a lot of fantasies about jobs [...] so I could quit the Ramones. Like being a doorman or a candy store owner, or having a hot dog stand."
3. About living by an old graveyard: "Once I went down there to get a loose brick and a dead person's hand fell out of the hole where the brick had been [...] the hand was all bone, but a gold and diamond ring was on its finger [...] it must've been worth two and a half carats [...] the money I got for it at the pawn shop kept me in dope and hostess cupcakes for months."
4. On Joey the Artist: "Once Joey bought some fruit and vegetables at the grocery store and used them

Nothing going wrong

to do a painting. He churned them in the blender and painted with them—you could either look at the painting or eat it.  
5. On *End of the Century*: “I still have no idea how [Phil Spector and the Ramones] finished *End of the Century*, or who actually played bass on it.”

#### Jimmy Alvarado

- Alice Bag, *Violence Girl* (book)
- Mission Of Burma, *The Obliterati* LP
- *Breaking Bad*, seasons 1-5
- Little Beaver, *Party Down* LP
- New Sound Of Numbers, *Invisible Magnetic* LP

#### Joe Dana

- Top 5 Moments at the 8th Annual Dre Day Celebration at the Dragonfly*
1. Bad Cop/Bad Cop covering “California Love” (2pac) and “No Diggity” (Black Street)
  2. Hands Like Bricks covering “Regulate” (Warren G), “Higher” (the Game), and “Let’s Get High” (Dr. Dre)
  3. Turkish Techno covering “Lodi Dodi” (Snoop Dogg), “Ain’t No Fun” (Snoop Dogg), and “Blow Your Mind” (Eve)
  4. Whiskey Christie and Ranae Hummel doing “Dopeman” (NWA) with us, Adder doing “Guilty Conscious” (Eminem) with us.
  5. Making 50 Cent’s “In Da Club” sound like Bad Brains wrote it.

#### Kayla Greet

1. Against Me!, *Transgender Dysmorphia Blues*
2. *Nights and Days in the Dark Carnival: Time Spent with Juggalos* by Craven Rock
3. Smooth Sailing, Princess, and Grenades at the Blue Moon Tavern on my birthday
4. Mad Conductor, *MC Rises*
5. *Snakepit Tattoo Stories* by Ben Snakepit (zine)

#### Kevin Dunn

1. Ben Snakepit, *Snake Pit Tattoo Stories* (zine)
2. Neighborhood Brats, *Total Dementia 7*”
3. Little Dave Merriman, “It’s Cold”
4. Dott, *Swoon* LP
5. Chumped, Self-titled 12”

#### Kurt Morris

1. Mutoid Man, *Helium Head*
2. Motörhead, *Ace of Spades*
3. Motörhead, *Aftershock*
4. Propagandhi, *Failed States*
5. Reatards, *Grown Up Fucked Up*

#### Mark Twistworthy

- Canadian Rifle, *Deep Ends* LP
- Flesh World, Self-titled 12”
- Glass Hits, *Better Never Than Late* LP
- Burnt Skull, *Sewer Birth* LP
- Libyans, *Expired Language* LP

#### Marty Ploy

##### Favorite Live Albums

1. Descendents, *Liveage*
2. Avail, *Live at the Bottom of the Hill*
3. The Weakerthans, *Live at the Burton Cummings Theater*
4. The Lunachicks, *Drop Dead Live*
5. ALL, *Live Plus One*

#### Matt Average

- *The Fog*, soundtrack 2 x LP
- Boom Boom Kid, *Musica Sin La Intervención De Cristo* LP
- Nekromantiker, Self-titled LP
- *Rosemary’s Baby*, soundtrack LP
- Transfix, Self-titled LP

#### Matt Seward

##### Top 5 Live(Age)

1. *Filmage* screening at The Bottletree
2. Homage (Descendents tribute)
3. Rubrics at The Forge
4. Diarrhea Planet at The Bottletree
5. Iron Chic at The Firehouse

#### Matthew Werts

- The Dovers, Self-titled
- Angel Olsen, *Burn Your Fire for No Witness*
- Kate Bush, *The Dreaming*
- Various Artists, *Killed By Hardcore Vol. 3*
- Vincent Gallo, *When*

#### Mike Faloon

1. Chills, *Molten Gold* single
2. Future Virgins, *Late Republic* LP
3. Mind Spiders, *Inhumanistic* LP
4. Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
5. Safes, *Thanks to You* EP

#### Mike Frame

1. Dan Baird & Homemade Sin, *Circus Life* CD
2. The Pygmies, Self-titled LP
3. Neko Case, *The More I Fight* CD
4. Lee Hazlewood, *Trouble Is a Lonesome Town* LP
5. Chris Darrow, *Artist Proof* CD

#### Naked Rob

##### Terrible Tuesday Radio Show | SF

- Neighborhood Brats, *Total Dementia 7*” (SF via LA punk rock)
- Shoes This High, *Straight to Hell* LP (“80s New Zealand post-punk-reissue)
- Peace Creep, Self-titled LP (SF rock punk)
- PyPy, *Pagan Day* LP (Canadian psych punk)
- Blacklisters, *BLKLSTRS* LP (UK noise rock)

#### Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Two Skunks for Valentines Day: A trip to Awesome Fest 6* zine by Mike Faloon.
2. The Ballantynes, *Liquor Store Gun Store Pawn Shop Church* EP (East Van soul club excitement!)
3. First Base, Self-titled LP (Repping Toronto haard!)
4. The #1s, *Sharon 7*” (Incredible Irish punk rock)
5. Eating Out, *Burn 7*” (Vancouver in the house!)

#### Nick Toerner

- Frozen Teens / Street Legal, Split 7”
- Future Virgins, *Late Republic* LP
- Vacation, *Candy Waves* CD
- Tenement / Screaming Females, Split 7”
- Radioactivity, Self-titled

#### Nicole Macias

1. Cheap Girls, *Find Me a Drink Home*
2. King Kahn & BBQ Show, *Invisible Girl*
3. King Kahn & BBQ Show, Self-titled LP
4. Gateway District, *Old Wild Hearts*
5. Pentagram, *Last Daze Here*

#### Nighthawk

##### Top 5 Stay Retarded Weekend Moments

- The Dopamines *not* playing (posers)
- Lipstick Homicide / Too Many Daves / Boys / Tiltwheel at Chill Dawg Cove
- The Transgressions
- Nato Coles forgetting to play the barbeque show at Silver Ballroom
- Nothing going wrong

#### Paul Silver

##### Top 5 (Pop) Punk Songs

1. Articles Of Faith, “Every Man for Himself”
2. Hüsker Dü, “Celebrated Summer”
3. Rumspringer, “Hindsight Is 20/20, Foresight Is \$200 an Hour”
4. Pitchfork, “Thin Ice”
5. RVIVR, “Wrong Way/One Way”

#### Rene Navarro

1. Spokenest, *Destroy, Gone, Listen, Lose* Cassette
2. Summer Vacation, Wreck Of The Zephyr, and Wulfen Rag at the Wulf Den.
3. *The Manticore* by Robertson Davies
4. The thriving Tijuana PONX scene, tied with the thriving LA Jiu-Jitsu scene.
5. Street Eaters, *Rusty Eyes and Hydrocarbons* LP

#### Rev. Nørð

- Teengenerate, *Get More Action* LP
- Dirtbombs, *Ooey Goey Chewy Ka-blooy LP*
- Brimstone Howl, *Magic Hour* LP
- Sugar Stems, *Can’t Wait* LP
- Manual Scan, *All Night Scan* LP

#### Rich Cocksedge

- White Murder, Self-titled LP
- Dalaplan, Self-titled LP
- Epic Problem, *Lines 7*”
- Muncie Girls / Great Cynics, Split 12”
- Autistic Youth, *Nonage* LP

#### Ryan Nichols

1. Black coffee
2. *Black Coffee Blues* by Henry Rollins
3. Becky Lee & Drunkfoot with Beat-man at Alex’s Bar
4. Chain And The Gang
5. Black Bug “Reflecting the Light”

#### Sal Lucci

1. Video, *(Join The) Hate Wave 7*”
2. Cumstain, *White People Problems* LP
3. Teengenerate, *Get More Action* LP
4. Finding a copy of Video’s *Leather Leather* LP
5. Finding a copy of Cosmic Psychos’ *Glorious Barsteds* LP

#### Sean Arenas

- Acid Fast, *Rabid Moon* LP
- Secret Smoker, *Terminal Architecture* LP
- North Trolls, *Sup* LP
- Ex-Breathers, *Collision* LP
- Jabber, *Too Many Babes 7*”

#### Sean Koeppenick

- Best Johnny Thunders Songs*
1. “Get off the Phone”
  2. “Born to Lose”
  3. “So Alone”
  4. “London Boys”
  5. “You Can’t Put Your Arms Around a Memory”

#### Tim Brooks

- Leatherface, *More Mush* LP
- Frustration, *Uncivilized* LP
- Radioactivity, *Back to Me* EP
- Frenzy, *Noisy Trouble* EP
- Needles, *Desesperación* EP

#### Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently*
1. *In a World...*
  2. *Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony*
  3. *Her*
  4. *High Tech Low Life*
  5. *Cosmic Psychos: Blokes You Can Trust*

#### Todd Taylor

- Future Virgins, *Late Republic* LP
- RVIVR, *The Beauty Between* LP
- Acid Fast, *Rabid Moon* LP
- White Murder, Self-titled LP
- *Zero Fade* by Chris Terry (book)
- LA Zine Fest, 2014

#### Tommy Vandervort

1. OWTB, Menzingers, Arms Aloft, and Elway at The Firehouse, Normal, IL
2. *A Tribute to Tony Sly*
3. Against Me!, *Transgender Dysphoria Blues*
4. The Methadones, *Not Economically Viable*, tie Break
- Anchor, *Rolling Blackouts*
5. Red Scare and Underground Communiqué Records record fair/ swap at Gingerman, Chicago, IL

#### Yvonne Drazan

- Top 5 Easy Yet Yummy Recipes*
1. “Million Dollar Spaghetti” from madefrompinterest.net
  2. “Green Sauce” from the-girl-who-ate-everything.com
  3. “Korean Beef over Rice” from jcocina.com
  4. “Bacon Cheeseburger Puffs” from plainchicken.com
  5. “Basic No Knead Bread” from frugallivingnw.com





## 2ND DISTRICT:

### **What's Inside You!?: LP**

This horribly corny, self-described "glam-punk" record from Germany has a bit going for it, but 2nd District seems to be striving for a commercial sound simply for the sake of it. Perhaps that's a snap judgment, but from the overproduction on down, there is an obnoxious quality to this that is just plain grating, especially the eunuch-ish vocals. It's as if years of being made fun of egged these guys on to come up with something worthy of being made fun of. 2nd District is the sort of group you'd see in a TV representation of counterculture, wondering if it's a real band or a group of actors pretending to suck. —Art Ettinger (Wanda, wandarecords.de)

### **ABUSE: Self-titled: LP**

Track after track of unrelenting powerviolence up to code with Canadian juggernauts Column Of Heaven and the mighty Despise You. In recent years, the powerviolence genre has flourished with new blood from all over the world. It could easily be a full-time job keeping up with the attention-worthy bands. Lucky for us, To Live A Lie is becoming more and more of a reliable authority in putting out the goods. If you miss Threatener, give your boys in Abuse a holler. —Juan Espinosa (To Live A Lie, tolivalie.com)

### **ACID FAST: Rabid Moon: LP**

What are your thoughts on *Stray Dog Town* by Bent Outta Shape, *Detention Halls* by Ringers, *Light and Vision* by Homeowners, or *A History of Rats* by This Is My Fist? If you consider yourself a fan of any of those records, then I highly suggest picking up *Rabid Moon*. I've been listening to this record constantly for over six months and it's only gotten better over time. If you're in the market for a record bursting with melody via male and female vocals, deliciously sick guitar lines, and heart-felt songs, get *Rabid Moon*. —Daryl (Protagonist / Adagio830 / California Casual Cruiser Club)

### **ADAM WIDENER: Vesuvio Nights: LP**

Every song sounds the same, which is like shit. Dude's voice is drowned in reverb, and some shitty, spooky Johnny-cum-lately weak ass garage backing it up. The fact that this is a solo project leads me to believe that this guy is just an annoying ass his music. —Vincent (Speakertree)

### **ADOLESCENTS:**

#### **Presumed Insolent: CD**

Leapin' Lasagna Luigi—here they come again with another airtight

# RECORD REVIEWS



"Your feelings about drugs are probably a good indicator of whether you'll enjoy this."

—Vincent Battilana

UKIAH DRAG, THE: Jazz Mama Is Crying: 12" EP

record. Rippin' solos, cool harmonies, and killer tunes make this a great listen. Everyone sounds on their game here. "Forever Summer" and "Riptide" alone are back-to-back scorches. Don't pass this by just because it's not their debut. The Adolescents are still making quality punk rock with fire down below. —Sean Koeppen (Concrete Jungle, concretejunglerecords.com)

### **AGAINST ME!**

#### **Transgender Dysmorphia Blues: LP**

On New Year's Eve I showed up to a party my boyfriend at the time was reluctantly throwing. I walked in to find a fog machine raging as hard as the guests and upping the ante on the dense pea soup already outside. Between that and wisps of cigarettes, I saw him dancing in the soft glow while the little black dress he was in struggled to catch up with his moves. "Are you freaked out that I'm wearing a dress?" he asked. "No. Are you freaked out that I'm not?" was my response and he proudly went back to being unabashedly himself. Laura Jane Grace and crew are doing the same thing on this new record, only they're not asking anymore. Against Me! are taking the piss out of gender roles and quickly show you what it's like to have to live day to day as someone you're not. This album aims to get under your skin no matter where you stand on

trans-acceptance. With lyrics like "They just see a faggot / They hold their breath not to get the sick," hopefully you feel as dehumanized and fed up as she does. "Drinking with the Jocks" is the angriest track and the shortest—very straight and to the point. It is the perfect coming out song: abrasive to those who don't understand and appealing to anyone who's been fucked with for being who they are. To me, that's as punk rock as it gets. Quite a few friends I know through music have come out as transgender in the last year and their actions are creating a positive shift in those around them. Musically, this record is their best since *Against Me!* as the *Eternal Cowboy* and almost makes up for *White Crosses* and *New Wave*. And for those who've been wondering, her voice hasn't changed; it's only gotten stronger and lent itself to many of us struggling with identity. —Kayla Greet (Total Treble, totaltreble.bigcartel.com)

### **ALONERS: Demo: Cassette**

Gruff punk that at its best sounds like the Brokadays and at its worst sounds like one of those bands on a BYO Records comp that no one ever bothered to buy records from. It's listenable, but nothing you'll be jonesing for. For a demo, though, this shows a lot of promise. Grade: B. —Bryan Static (Self-released)

### **ANCIENT FILTH: You're Nothing You're Everything: 7" EP**

Massachusetts punks Ancient Filth are back with their second 7" of raging hardcore. As with past releases, the music is one brutal assault after another in the honorable tradition of past MA bands such as Out Cold and Cut The Shit. Lyrically, however, they have much more to scream about than the typical fare of "stabbed in the back" betrayal stories or suburban lethargy and disillusionment. Ancient Filth encourage us all to give a fuck, if not for the sake of others then for the sake of ourselves: to agree to disagree, to call out bullshit (organized religion, capitalist oppression) when necessary, and to question not only our country but our world: "believe nothing, examine everything." All this without pretense or a high-and-mighty stance on the issues they feel strongest about. The artwork and packaging is, once again, stellar: a booklet sleeve with the lyrics printed on a separate inner booklet stapled in the center and a huge fold-out poster, to boot. Can't possibly say enough good things about this band. Get this or die posing. —Juan Espinosa (Ancient Filth self-released, ancientfilth.com)

### **ANGRY GODS: "Greyed Delay" b/w "The Swell": 7"**

Holy shit, these guys are gnarly. If I had to describe this record in one word it would be "heavy." The cover is a photograph of a desolate Midwest-looking winter while the back looks to be the same spot during spring. If I had to guess, I would say that these guys recorded this record during the cover photograph and released it when the back happened. These two songs both seem to be about the weather—dark, grey, cold weather. I hate any weather below seventy degrees; if I had to live in the snow, I'm sure I would make music this pissed off too. Check this record out if Folgers isn't working for you. —Ryan Nichols (Nervous Habit, nervoushabitrecords@gmail.com, nervoushabitrecords.storenvy.com)

### **ANTAGONIZERS ATL:**

#### **Hold Your Ground: CD**

No apologies street punk from down south. The singer was in a short-lived skinhead band called Vibram 94 who I really liked and the bassist once had a drink with one of the members of Bad Brains, or did something with them and has dreads. This is straight-up-the-line Street Dogs, Workin' Stiffs blue-collar vibes. Gang choruses, smart production, four tracks. I was more than happy to start hating, but this is boss, especially the last track,

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RAZORCAKE 78


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sounding like a street punk Stitches meets Pennywise. There are some heads here at Razorcake HQ that would love this shit. Jimmy? –Tim Brooks (Antagonizers, antagonizersatl.com)

#### ATLAS SHRUGGED:

##### **Don't Look Back in Anger: CD**

Sorry to the boys in the band, but I can't listen to Atlas Shrugged without looking back in anger. Note: The following review has more to do with the reviewer than the reviewee. I remember when bands like this were everywhere in the Inland Empire, where I grew up. My friends would ask, "Hey, wanna go to a show tonight?" And I would say, "Cool, who's playing?" And they would say, "[All male band with running shoes and basketball jerseys that screams a lot about friendship.]" Not wanting to be left at home alone on a Friday night, I would go, with my head down, looking out of place with my U.S. Bombs or Clash T-shirt on. No one at the show would talk to me, and I would probably get punched in the head while someone with ironed hair and a lip ring was "dancing." That guy would like Atlas Shrugged. The singer sounds like a Beastie Boy. Now that my review is over, I am going to watch Beastie Boys videos on YouTube and try to get over this reliving of my late teens. Fuck the Inland Empire. –John Mule (Trip Machine Laboratories, tripmachine.com)

#### AUTONOMY / DOOMTOWN: Split: LP

Autonomy: Great blend of politically astute sentiment and post-punk attack. The songs gel and bounce with

bubbling bass runs and hypnotic guitar lines one minute, then things get nice and dissonant the next, closing with a righteous cover of the Wipers' "Doom Town." Standing here slack jawed and amazed as I flip this puppy over... Doom Town: Thought Autonomy might have these kids on the ropes, but they more than handle their business here, with that dark-tinged thud punk sound they've honed so well on previous efforts still serving 'em well. Gloomy but not goth, meaty but not meathead, and saturated with sophistication in its wiggly bass lines and chord runs. The final tally: A solid draw, making this a faboo split. –Jimmy Alvarado (Trend Is Dead)

#### BAD SPORTS: Bras: CD

Bad sports bras are a funny concept. All sports bras are bad in my opinion; it's a very unflattering look that's all business. I've seen these guys' name around for a while (this is their third LP) but hadn't come around to listening to them until I received this CD. *Bras* was produced by Mark Ryan and Jeff Burke from the Marked Men and if you're into them at all, you'll love this record. This is a great punk rock record with a poppy, upbeat sound. The songs are catchy and fun with no bullshit messages or preachy opinions, just a good time. There's a little bit of everything on here from power pop to '70s punk. If you like the '70s CBGB's sound, old Posh Boys bands, and Dirtnap bands you'll love this record. –Ryan Nichols (Dirtnap)

#### BEDLAM KNIVES, THE: Here Comes Trouble: 7" EP

The Bedlam Knives sound like the legendary Los Angeles punk staple X. If you are a moron, allow me to translate: The Bedlam Knives sound fucking rad! Doug Kane (aka Doug Dagger), formerly of Schleprock and The Generators, has a velvet smooth voice for a punk rock singer, but it works here. Bass player, Chalon Harris, plays the worthy Exene to Doug's John Doe, providing companion vocals with a wide range, from sugar sweet to switchblade slashing. The rest of the band kicks ass here too: a more than solid rhythm section and dual guitars playing riffs that would do any red-blooded American or two-wheeling, leather-clad rebel proud. Rock and fucking roll! –John Mule (Dr. Strange, drstrange.com)

#### BEST PRACTICES: Sore Subjects: 7"

RI's Best Practices return with four tracks of power pop meets garage punk with an edge. It's a sound the band first developed on their previous *The EP* LP, which I reviewed in an earlier issue and thoroughly enjoyed. Everything I liked about their previous release is present on *Sore Subjects*, from the tongue-in-cheek lyrics and song titles, to infectious riffs that get you rocking out even while sitting down. At first I thought the production on this sounded a bit muddier than their previous recording, but when you crank up the volume on the stereo, it makes it feel like the band is there playing in your

living room, and I enjoy the pseudo-live feel. –Paul J. Comeau (Tor Johnson, torjohnsonrecords@yahoo.com)

#### BLOOD BUDDIES: Tree & Bird: 7"

This formerly of L.A. and now residing in Portland two-piece has matched, if not improved on, their previous self-titled 7". On *Tree & Bird*'s two tracks, Rachel Lynch riffs around with garage punk chords and shout-sings just under the throat-wrecking level, calling out her connection to the natural world outside of mega-jumbo urban areas. And, yeah, we all love cities (bars, busses!), but cities also have gross plastic bags screaming in the trees and exhaust coating all of your possessions, so between knowing intuitively that cities are kinda gross and hearing the raw sparseness of Blood Buddies songs, lyrics like, "If you're looking for me / If you're lost / If you really need me / I'm on a mountaintop" become simultaneously alarming and catchy. In the absence of second guitar or a single bass, all that remains is great songwriting: hooks, sharp edges, and the slight shock that hits you when you hear uninhibited rock for the first time in a long time. –Jim Joyce (Ghostbot, ghostbotrecords.com)

#### BLOODTYPES, THE: Johnny: 7"

If you miss The Epoxies like crazy (like some of us do), the song "Johnny" is going to make you a very, very happy listener. (Searching the interweb and my own facial recognition program, while not official, I'll posit that at least



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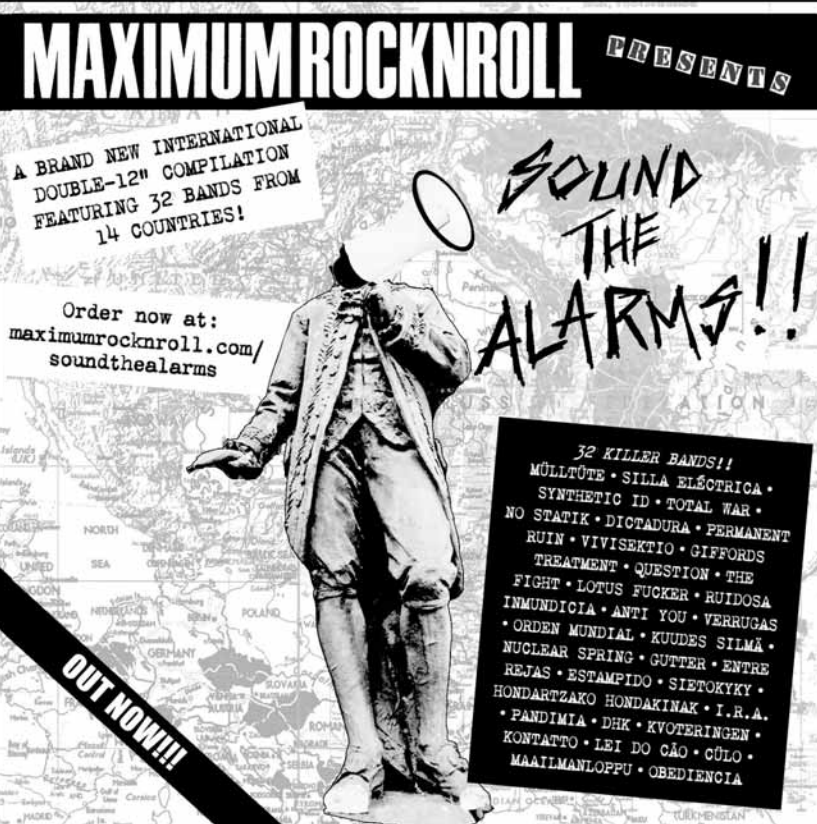
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one member was in that band.) Female-fronted pop punk fueled with swirling keyboards and a driving beat. "Alien Eyes" delivers a similar track with more '80s-styled guitar histrionics and "Don't Wanna" winds it up with a whirlwind pop tantrum. "Destroy the Heart" left me a little cold with its more mid-tempo '50s approach, but you won't be disappointed if you spend a few of those blood donation dollars on The Bloodtypes. —Matt Seward (Bomb Pop, bombpoprecords.com)

#### BOOM BOOM KID: *Música Sin La Intervención De Cristo: LP*

Boom Boom Kid are one of the few punk bands to take musical risks anymore. Even more impressive is that the risks they take turn out successfully. Primarily pop punk, but they sometimes go into grind, hardcore punk, then folk style songs like "Como Empezar... El Despues," or really super pop that harkens back to mid-1970s AM radio fare, like "I Do." Then there's a song like "Pon To Corazon El La Musica" that brings to mind late 1980s / early '90s Dischord bands like Fugazi and Jawbox. If the syrupy sweet "Si Esas Paredes Hablaran... Maria Ojos Negros No Mas" doesn't stick in your skull and put a smile on your face, then you might be dead. Or just an asshole. The mood is light, the songs are catchy as hell, and played with nothing but heart. This LP is a collection of songs from all their previous releases. Obviously, a good jumping off point. I know I'm going to start searching out their back

catalog. This stuff is great, and will get many repeated listens. —M.Avr (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

#### BREAKDOWN: *Runnin' Scared: LP*

Breakdown were one of those bands whose influence has always been heard more than their actual music, due mostly in part to the fact that their early output consisted of two demo tapes and four tracks total on the late '80s comps NYHC: *The Way It Is* and *Where the Wild Things Are*. Breakdown's talent was overshadowed by other bands in the scene that were able to put out records in the late '80s (Warzone, Gorilla Biscuits, Agnostic Front, etc), but that doesn't make them a bad band. The younger generation might remember singer Jeff Perlin from his time in Slumlords, but his younger years (these recordings specifically) were spent contemplating more serious issues and making music a lot more stripped down. These songs are sourced from the band's second demo tape, recorded in 1987, as well as a live set from WNYU in '89 that sounds better than expected. There are two more tracks from an unreleased session in '87 that are just alternate versions of other tracks and I didn't really feel are needed, but I'm certainly not going to complain about extra stuff being thrown on top of what you're already getting here. I've always had an affinity for the NYHC recordings that were a little rough around the edges (like Warzone's *Lower East Side 7"*, the Life's Blood 7"), and this record falls nicely into that

category. This record works because not only is it a document of something falling into the obscure side of a certain scene for collectors and completists, but the songs are good enough in their own right to warrant getting a proper release. —Ian Wise (Painkiller)

#### BRICKWALL VULTURES:

##### *Vultures Rule O.K.: 7"*

The most exciting new American oi 7" I've heard in ages, *Vultures Rule O.K.!* has me bopping around my apartment like a maniac. Hailing from Chicago, these guys sound a lot like Patriot, but with harsher vocals, similar to the legendary band Squiggy. The lyrics are of the most basic type, covering the standard street themes of unity, urban pride, and a willingness to fight. The barebones brilliance of Brickwall Vultures exemplifies all that is great in skinhead music. Catchier than chlamydia in Cleveland, Brickwall Vultures truly rules. —Art Ettinger (Sexy Baby)

#### BRIMSTONE HOWL: *Magic Hour: LP*

The cover of this album has a cartoon of a duck-billed, eyeball monster wearing a space suit in the middle of a drought-ridden wasteland. It looks like a movie from the iconic 1960s-70s low-budget director, Roger Corman. The band has an equally retro-fabulous sound, while still sounding completely fresh. I love this music. I would cut off three fingers to be able to write surfy, reverb-heavy guitar riffs like there are here. Maybe four fingers. I can't say enough about

how fun this music is. A blurb on the sleeve of this LP might sum up the sentiment and feel of the songs best: "Get down with the right sound. Burn your false idols. Quick! It's Magic Hour." —John Mule (Certified PR, certifiedprerecords.com)

#### BUM-CITY SAINTS:

##### *Spirit of the City: CD*

Fuck yes! San Francisco punk rock! I love my city and we've got a lot of great bands. But sometimes it feels like everyone's trying too hard to do something different and quite often we're left with really very few bands like this: straight up, no frills, balls-out punk rock. Sure, there's some streetpunk and hardcore in there, but where do you think those subgenres came from anyway? Solid hooks, solid lyrics, no bonehead shit, no cheese, and plenty to put your fist in the air and sing along to. SYFATB! —Chad Williams (Self-released, bumcitysaints.bandcamp.com)

#### CANADIAN RIFLE / ZAPIAIN: *Split: 7"*

Canadian Rifle take steady three-chord tunes, soak them in cement, wrap them in barbed wire, and downshift them an octave on this most recent release, continuing further down the darker path they moved toward with 2010's *Facts* EP. As of late, there are more mean, mean hooks rumbling here. Sonically, "Fire" and "Born" are walled-in with thick, glugging bass and gnarled-out call-and-response guitars to the point that the singing emerges

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almost as secondary to the drum and guitar. The vocals are melodic roars and shouts that layer up the beauty built by the instrumentation. I liked *Facts*, but this shit is superb. If Canadian Rifle is the weight of solid, overcast skies, Zapiain, fine punks of Yorkshire, play comparatively brighter melodic punk, although here the difference is illuminative and doesn't diminish from the split as a whole. The bands complement each other. The unrushed hooks of "You Always Said It Was" and "Scapegoat" feature a band that's happy to swish between palm-muted charges and rollicking open song. They've drawn numerous comparisons to Blue Medic and even a less rhythmically rigid Bad Religion, but I'm hearing a best-of amalgamation of '90s punk groups that, in the case of Zapiain, has distinguished itself by taking time. In one hopeful lament, the singer notes that, "I know you've heard this song / A million times before" and if that's true, it sounds good, possibly better than before. Dig it. —Jim Joyce (All In Vinyl, allinvinyl.com)

#### CAPITALIST KIDS, THE / TIGHT BROS: Split 7"

The Capitalist Kids are one of Austin's most consistent pop punk bands. They have been dishing out their Mr. T Experience-influenced jams for years, using the same formula of witty, sometimes mildly political melodic punk tunes to get their message across, and they do it really well. Their side of this split features three songs, including

a cover of a Bee Gees song. The Tight Bros side of this record is very heavily Marked Men influenced—almost too much so. Their three songs are good in that Dirtnap Records kind of way, but they just come off as being a little too derivative. While the Capitalist Kids side perfectly shows an influence without imitating it, the Tight Bros could learn a thing or two from them. —Mark Twistworthy (Toxic Pop, toxicpoprecords.com)

#### COMADRE: Self-titled: LP

With a pledge to DIY and a considerable distance from their screamo upbringing, Comadre brings us their swan song—and it's a doozy. It's difficult to appreciate the evolution without acknowledging the scrappy sincerity of *The Youth* and the frantic appeal of *Burn Your Bones*. But since *A Wolf Ticket*, Comadre has ventured towards more varied melody, ranging from pop lead guitar to trebly hardcore. Evolution without the loss of authenticity is a colossal task. (Recall all the bands that have forfeited their ties to engaging punk music because of major labels, the pursuit of image, or straight up bad decisions.) Thankfully, this LP is a glowing example. The slickly produced tapestry of bass-driven verses complemented by keys, horns, murmured vocals, and acoustic guitars is equally as hard-hitting as any of their previous outings. The keyboard-driven "Summertime" should be audible mush, but all the elements gel creating a pogo-inducing,

hair-whipping jam. Furthermore, "Binge" sounds like The Smiths while retaining Juan's throat-tearing vocals, "Date Night" oozes spaghetti western vibes, and "The Moon" is a sore throat ballad. With an almost ten year history, this final LP is a fitting bookend; it's uncompromising like every great punk record. A contemporary classic. —Sean Arenas (Vitriol, vitriolrecords.com, jason@graforlock.com)

#### COPY SCAMS: Copy & Destroy: 10"

This is the sound of a scene celebrating itself. High-energy, catchy, oddly mature pop punk with a heavy, early SST-ish guitar tone. You expect to hear whoa-ohs, but are pleasantly surprised when you don't. A collaboration of zine veterans from the U.S., France, and the UK, *Copy & Destroy* does for zine culture what the Gooningtons did for pop punk as a genre. Inside jokes that make everyone feel "in" take playful stabs at zine clichés: excuses for zines being late, lists of likes and dislikes, click-clacking typewriters. My favorite track is "Up for Trades." Every punk's had someone try to swap a token for a work representing weeks of effort, right? Don't toss this in the riot grrrl bin (though it is straight outta Portland) but its confessional style reminds me of "Musical Fanzine" by Team Dresch. Alex Wreck's (of *Brainscan*) vocals evoke Sheena of Lemuria. This isn't a serious album by a band trying to innovate, but the warmth it's suffused with cannot be ignored. I want Copy Scams to tour, because every show

would be a party, but I can't afford those plane tickets. The record comes with a fourteen-page zine and a download code, so I'll have to imagine the fun. —Claire Palermo (Lunchroom, lunchroomrecords.blogspot.com; and Bus Stop Press, xtramedium@laposte.net, busstoppress.weebly.com)

#### COSMIC PSYCHOS:

##### Down on the Farm: 12" EP

Dunno how valid this statement is in this modern era of globalized everything, but it used to be, if given enough time, every scene eventually coagulated around a specific sound or thing that made what they did unique from what was coming from other areas—OC had the whole surfy thug-pop dual guitar thing down pat, Minneapolis planted the seeds that would sprout the "alternative nation," Arizona and Texas both cornered the markets on both the furious and the weird, you get the idea. Australian bands have long been able to distill damned near any style of rock down to its most primal, gooey center and bend, smooth, and twist it into some very interesting origami patterns—AC/DC, Rose Tattoo, Birthday Party, Scientists, Hard-Ons, and Radio Birdman all played in different ends of the sandbox, but if you listen with surprisingly little effort, you'll find that the first half of this sentence applies to all of 'em. As this reissue of their 1985 debut EP shows, Cosmic Psychos kept to tradition by boiling their tunes down to their bare essentials before adding

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heaps of sludgy tempos, hyper-fuzzed bass and guitars, and simple lyrics about workin', dames, and such, the results of which are tunes by turns punky, hypnotic to the point of being almost psychedelic, and just all-around fuggin' heavy. If that description reminds you of some of the output from a certain clutch of bands primarily based in the West Coast, especially the Pacific Northwest, a few years later, suffice to say one need do no more than listen to L7's "Fuel My Fire" and then listen to the Cosmic Psychos' "Lost Cause" off of their *Go the Hack* LP to hear how deep an influence the Psychos had on 'em. Fine chance to revisit a fine debut, and the band's apparently still goin' strong and still strip-mining the same sludgy mountain, so you might wanna do some diggin' around. —Jimmy Alvarado (Goner)

**COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON:  
Through the Wires: LP**

Dark. Very dark, brooding, slow-burning, bleak, apocalyptic punk. Elements of Tragedy and Amebix combine with melodic (but dark) guitar lines, basslines, and drum parts that really keep things interesting. Well thought out and thoroughly dark lyrics cover all of your dystopian bases, from societal thought control through the media ("A Walking Dream") to the destruction of earth ("The Portal"). The only sliver of light contained on this black disc is the hope of finding an escape from all the shit that these worldly forces

shovel onto you—and fittingly—it's the title track. This one takes a couple listens for the quality of the songs to shine through, but it's worth it. Did I mention how dark it is? —Chad Williams (Skuld, skuld@skuldreleases.de, skuldreleases.de / Aborted Society, abortedociety@hotmail.com, abortedociety.com)

**COUNTRY DARK, THE:  
Dead Man's Handjob: CD**

Highly adept Finnish perverts who sound like a sex-obsessed Cramps ((yes, more so than usual)) ninety percent of the time and make me recall the song "Homo Truck Driving Man" by the Pajama Slave Dancers the other ten ((with the notable exception of the first song, "Buttplug," which, after much deep thinking, i realized sounded much like "Snobby Disdain" off my first solo record)). In additionally interesting matters, the Nick Knox/Mo Tucker drum style made me come to the conclusion that cymbals are the foreskins of rock'n'roll. You're welcome. BEST SONG: "Don't Wanna Come Too Soon." BEST SONG TITLE: "Shemale?" "Truck Stop Where?" "Cockteasin' Chick?" There's just so many from which to choose! FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: All the naked ladies playing cards which comprise the brunt of the artwork here have panties Photoshopped in. Booo! —Rev. Nørb (Big Money Recordings, bigmoneyrecordings.com)

**CRIMINAL CODE: No Device: LP**

Taiga—Criminal Code guitarist and vocalist—refuses the post-punk and hardcore labels for the band. And I believe that's coming from a genuine place, but to deny those subgenres' impact on the band's sound would be a real loss. What sets Criminal Code apart from the current wave of dark, look-at-all-my-effect-pedals punk is the sheer aggression in Taiga's vocals. It's the unholy marriage of post-punk's ambience and hardcore's hostility consummated in a Reno basement and birthed in Portland's Buzz Or Howl Studios. The liner notes claim "attempts fail completely" and I understand what they're alluding to, but if *No Device* was an attempt to create a full-length that's damning (we're all fucked, and we have a pretty good idea of whose fault it is) yet played with a haunting intensity (holy shit, they're just a three-piece?!), then I think it's no doubt a success. —Daryl (Deranged)

**CUMSTAIN:  
White People Problems: LP**

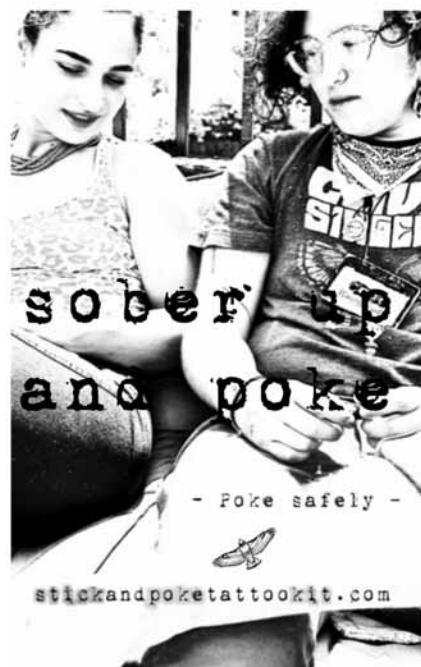
This band, and this album, is a fucking glorious, disgusting mess. And it's called *White People Problems*! Don't let the cock-and-balls and semen font fool you, these songs are downright sweet, sentimental, and lovelorn. If "I Ain't Wrong" doesn't bring a tear to your eye, well, fuck you. Lo-fi, garage-y pop in a Burger Records sort of way. I can't believe they didn't draw any penises on the label name. That joke just makes itself. —Sal Lucci (Resurrection, facebook.com/getresurrected)

**DAN PADILLA / DOWN AND OUTS:  
Split: 7"**

The latest from All In Vinyl's split series where they take an American band and pair them with a British band. As per usual, I'm familiar with the American band, but not so much the British one. I assume you, dear reader, are familiar with Dan Padilla and their anthemic, gruff take on pop punk. It's great to hear that this band is still going strong. When their first record came out, I thought we were going to get another Tiltwheel: great music, but with releases few and far between. This is clearly not the case. Releasing what feels like multiple records every year, the quality has yet to degrade for these guys. Down And Outs provide the B-side, with a sound close to the street punk of BYO Records heyday. They have multiple vocalists, which is always a plus for me, and they can all sing well, which makes it even better. Definitely a band that requires closer inspection. Grade: A. —Bryan Static (All in Vinyl, no address, allinvinyl.com)

**DATA CONTROL: Self-titled: 7" EP**

My L.A.-centric self is hearing shades of Manson Youth, Artistic Decline, and maybe some Adolescents buried in this, but its core is some primo fuggin' minor-chord hardcore that isn't all screamy-howly and hyper-fast, but rather equal parts drone, thud, and aggression. If the Regulations float yer boat, you're gonna love this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Signaler Fran Ovan, andymongoloid@yahoo.se)



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**DILDOZER: The Titular Tape: Cassette**

Decent smarty-pants punk rock from this St. Augustine, Florida-based trio. Having grown up in the area, I can relate to the "doin' it for fun" vibe that is projected on this cassette. I get the feeling these guys are doing this for themselves and would happily play a show to three people at their local watering hole and they couldn't care less. I have to confess that is a welcome feeling after sifting through releases from "professional" punk bands with endorsement deals and the like. To me, this is the sound of drinking a lukewarm twelve pack of Keystone Light with some of your closest buds and not giving a fuck. I'm not complaining. —Garrett Barnwell (Self-released, thegazeupunk@gmail.com)

**DOSES: Self-titled: 12" EP**

These guys sound familiar, reminding me of Titwrench to a degree. Disjointed songs, huge drum machine sound, and atypical of what is going on these days. If they were to ditch the guitars and replace them with synthesizers, they could spearhead the Wax Trax revival (that has to be around the corner in this era of revivals). Then they have riffs that are similar to Black Flag. The sound is loud, all-pervasive, and has dark undercurrents. "Reasons to Kill" is the best of the eight. —M.Avr (Going Underground, goingundergroundrec.blogspot.com)

**DRUNK AS SHIT:****Drunk.Punk.Thrash: CD**

Curse you, Taylor. Listen, I fucking love booze, even more than drugs. I love songs about drinking as much as the next functioning alcoholic but weren't we done with "drunk punk" in the '90s? Guess not, huh? Oh wait, these fools are from Salt Lake City where there is no booze, I get it. Okay. Truly horrendous punk/thrash, like a terrible Grimple or Submachine or any other no mark bands from the '90s with crap solos and songs about booze. Don't get me wrong, I love booze, but even drunk this sucks. —Tim Brooks (Ballzout, ballzoutrecords.com)

**DUCKY BOYS / PINKERTON THUGS:****45: 7"**

Both of these bands are stalwarts of the '90s "street punk" era brought forth by the popularity of the Dropkick Murphys (but both have always been better than DKM in my opinion) and it's not hard to tell why. While there are literally hundreds of bands doing this stuff out there, I'd wager that ninety-eight percent of them sing about three main things: unity, the working class, and their boots. I'm sure that somewhere in both of these band's catalogs, those topics appear, but in 2012 (when this was recorded) it isn't the case. Both bands are still writing catchy songs that you can sing along with, but are telling a story more complex than the norm for the genre. I like it. —Ty Stranglehold (Jailhouse)

**E.A.T.E.R.: Doomsday Troops: 7" EP**

Not to be confused with first wave U.K. kiddie punk sensations Eater, this similarly acronymed unit, full name Ernst And The Edsholm Rebels, is yet another legendary Swedish hardcore band and this is a repress of their first EP originally released in 1983. Like many of their peers, they kick out some righteous, thrashy jams for your ear hole, with maybe a bit more quirk in the vocals and a bit less Discharge in the song structures. After decades of hearing assorted tracks on the oodles of compilations they've graced, it's nice to finally get my grubby little mitts on a copy of this bad boy. They're apparently still going strong, and a quick internet search produced the opportunity to sample some of their more recent work. They definitely remain a band worthy of much attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Loud Punk)

**EPIC PROBLEM: Lines: 7"**

Epic Problem's follow up to last years *All Broken 10"* is quite the barnstormer. Where the six tracks on that release packed a wallop, the four here take things up a level in terms of the clout the band manages to deliver, albeit it's a pounding that doesn't lose any of the tunelessness that the songs contain. After only half a dozen listens, the three new tracks and a beefy cover of "Weak" by The Beltones have managed to equal those from one of my favorite releases of 2013 and, in doing so, it's clear that Epic Problem is a band on the rise. Another point to note is that

the band sounds less like Off With Their Heads here than on previous releases showing that it is leaning towards a more distinct identity of its own. For now it's probably still worth pointing out that the band features the ex-Blitz bassist Mackie, who has progressed to six string duties these days but that shouldn't be a factor in checking this out. —Rich Cocksedge (Longshot, Longshotmusic.com / Rebellion, rebellionrecords.nl, info@rebellionrecords.nl / Rebel Sound, rebelsoundmusic.com)

**FALTER: Descent: 7"**

Falter comes from a dark, dark place. The lead singer is a shrieking, growing ball of pain and misanthropy. Though inarticulated, there's no mistaking their self-loathing, suicidal lyrics are anything but truly heartfelt. The singer just bleeds every bit of his lost soul into them. What makes *Descent* relevant goes beyond if they're a part some scene or whether you can appreciate their vigorous and unrelenting blend of crust, sludge, and powerviolence. No, what makes this record stand out is it feels like it was made purely for release, as if everyone involved is scratching their way out of a black pit of overwhelming despair. —Craven Rock (Reality Is A Cult, realityisacult.blogspot.com)

**FASHION FORESKINS: I Saw You Coming Closer So I Ran Inside the Door: Cassette**

Disposable, cheaply recorded punk rock. It's hard to even describe it any



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more than that. If I told you to just imagine a punk band, no adjectives involved, I'm sure your brain could come up with something pretty close to Fashion Foreskins in a number of seconds. The production of the release leaves a lot to be desired, in as much as I would have desired some production. Recorded live, it sounds like a one microphone affair with no editing involved. It starts off grating, but five monotone songs and one unlistenable poem later, you'll want to chuck your boom box out the window. I'll give the band credit, because at least they designed the cassette with garbage in mind. The liner notes give instructions to "listen, copy, destroy," but I'd recommend skipping to step three. Grade: D+. —Bryan Static (Self-released, no address listed)

#### **FEROX: Drones: CD**

Sounds like Flipper with a drum machine fronted by a way less cool version of Plastik Patrik. *Hands up if you got the gay French Canadian roller derby announcer reference!!* BEST SONG: "x" BEST SONG TITLE: "x". FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: x. —Rev. Nørð (X, n.com)

#### **FRANCEENS, THE: Stepford Smiles: CD**

An English power trio who mix bright, melodic punk with pounding garage rock, and male leads with female back-ups and harmonies. The guy has a clear shout that reminds me of Duncan Redmonds on the earlier Snuff albums, and they get out fast after nine songs

of memorable melodies. It's perfect. Another triumph for Manchester, England's TNS Records, who have been trading in fun, bullshit-free punk for a few years now. —Chris Terry (TNS, tnsrecords.co.uk)

#### **FRENCH EXIT: Guts & Black Stuff: CD**

Or better known as French Fucking Exit. Okay, not really I just made that up. Enough snarky quips, let's get down to business: French Exit deliver twelve propulsive tracks of No Idea-style beardo-punk filtered through a distinctly Southern Californian viewpoint with pretty impressive results on this, their first full-length release. Dual guitars slither around each other creating a taut and tense vibe while the rhythm section locks into an understated groove throughout the disc. Kinda random, but sometimes the crunchy guitar tones and phrasings remind me of Weezer. Like I said, random. However, French Exit pull it all together with an even-keeled maturity that make this CD wholly enjoyable and even highly recommendable. —Garrett Barnwell (It's Alive, info@itsalive.com)

#### **GBH: Perfume and Piss: LP**

A foreign vinyl pressing of the most recent GBH album (the CD came out on Hellcat in 2010). It sounds good (it was recorded well for the style), and the songs are upbeat, anthemic numbers with some gang vocals. The record isn't embarrassing and the band could certainly be doing a lot worse for themselves this late in the game, but

there's not a whole lot going on that interests me in this. Following a trend in more commercial street punk that I harp on a lot, the songs seem to be based around their catchy, kitschy titles and the riffs are a little *too* Hellcat for me. It seems like they were trying to make music specifically palatable for a younger crowd (some of the riffs sound like they were written by Lars Frederiksen, who produced the record and has always had a talent for writing songs that allude to a specific sound and genre). There's nothing really wrong with that, per se, and younger kids who see GBH at some big punk festival and then pick this record up are certainly getting a better deal than we did when Sham 69 and the Business put out their abysmal bids for fame in the late '90s, but I'm a little too old and jaded to appreciate this record at this point in my life. —Ian Wise (PHR)

#### **GENERACION SUICIDA / CATHOLIC SPIT: Split: 7"**

South Central L.A. punks Generacion Suicida continue their impressive reign of output with two tracks of stripped-down-to-the-barest-essentials punk rock. Street punk with equal parts smarts and brawn. Congratulations are in order to these fine gentlemen and lady for successfully completing their first European tour. Catholic Spit approaches their side with more of a *Hell Comes to Your House* (the death rock tracks) feel. Quick comparisons bring to mind 45 Grave and Christian Death-styled punk performed by far

younger counterparts. Homage is commonly mistaken for a throwback, but such is not the case here. Both bands have the potential to become seasoned veterans of their respective scenes (Los Angeles, Ventura) and I'm eager to hear what else they have up their sleeves. —Juan Espinosa (MMMM, discosmmm@hotmail.com)

#### **HOLINESS CHURCH OF THE VALLEY: Not of the Flock: 7" EP**

I spent my early twenties capturing every Gravity Records release as it came out, so this type of blood-letting emoviolence is right at the top of my list. Three guys just slaying themselves to the listeners' enjoyment. The last four tracks side with the noisier Angel Hair mixed with hardcore fare and maybe just a touch of epic Isis metal, but "Light of God" is the stunner (at only 1:13!). The tune of the guitar riff went straight to my Second Story Window/ Heroin-soaked brain and brought back happy feelings from twenty years ago. Turned this over three times in a row and it's not getting old. —Matt Seward (IFB, ifbrecords.com / Spring Street, springstreetrecords.storenvy.com)

#### **HOOPER: How to Become a Ghost: LP**

On first glance, this record looks like it will be pure Jade Tree Records circa 1998. As soon as I put the record on, I realized that looks can be quite telling. The sound here is exactly the kind of late-'90s emo that it looks like. The postcard-style design on the back cover is just right, as this band sounds like an

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exact mix of all of the bands on the Post Marked Stamps 7" series. Yup, if you still listen to Compound Red, Ethyl Meserve, Giants Chair, and the like, you are going to love Hooper. —Mike Frame (Snappy Little Numbers)

#### ILLS, THE: *Tuning Out: Cassette*

The Ills appear to be from Victoria, B.C., and since they are on the same label as the fantastic Durban Poison, I will assume that is the case. This tape has fifteen songs of killer snotty punk with a bit of a Bratmobile feel at times. Really strong songs and singing make this awesome Canadian band stand out. Would love to hear more from this band. This is a style that I love but, even still, this band is one of the best. —Mike Frame (Shake!)

#### INSERTS, THE: *Komm her!: 7"*

This record is as German as strudel. Four ladies playing three-chord punk. Partially sung in German and partially sung in very stern-sounding English, the simple sentiments over simple punk riffs translate nicely. "Run" stands out. "Run! Run! Run! You're not fast enough." It is inarguably punk. Nice one. —Billups Allen (Hundemann, hundemannrecords.de)

#### INSIDIOUS PROCESS: *Self-titled: LP*

Well, their label calls them metallic crust, and I guess I can hear some of that, but Insidious Process also flings around a lot of the frantic, galloping dread that I associate with nutjobs like the Crimson Curse and Sugar

Pie Koko. This vocalist sounds like something being dredged from a coffin, just shrill and deadly as hell. Blastbeats and searing invocations of doom and ruination (in Swedish and English) captured within some beautiful packaging and gorgeous vinyl. Just fucking relentless from the get-go. —Keith Rosson (Aborted Society)

#### JABBER: *Too Many Babes: 7"*

If these Oakland kids set out to make a record that sounds like the *Josie and the Pussycats* soundtrack, mission accomplished. Cut from the same hook-saturated Bloated Kat cloth as Lipstick Homicide, Jabber went in a more indie power pop direction. Consciously female-fronted, saccharine power chord fun that reminds you that all roads lead back to the Ramones. The second song's chorus is literally "I wanna be your girlfriend." Lead vocals are reminiscent of Screaming Females and Mean Jeans, but I also hear a nod to the Beach Boys in their 1960s style harmonies and lyrics about being true to yourself. Maybe it's an insult, but this is the kind of punk that even kids who get straight As and play football or cheerlead can listen to. Not wow, but solid and super fun. You can't help but dance. —Claire Palermo (Bloated Kat, bloatedkatrecords@gmail.com, bloatedkat.storenvy.com)

#### JABBER: *Too Many Babes: 7"*

Unabashed pop punk that mines the infinite recesses of unrequited love. (Let "Unsatisfied" be your anthem

for dateless nights.) The opening chords and the confident vocals are all immediately inviting. The "ahhh"s on "Maybe Next Year" send chills down my spine; they're whimsical morsels of elation over a lyrical pledge to make good on a New Year's resolution. There's definitely a playful X-ray Spex vibe fused with more contemporary anxiety like Cheeky or Lipstick Homicide. Each track is a lovingly crafted pop nuke of radioactive resilience. What's the half-life of a Jabber tune? The time it takes for them to craft an LP is when I'll finally shelf this 7". Recommended. —Sean Arenas (Bloated Kat, bloatedkatrecords@gmail.com)

#### JANE EYRE: *With Our Thoughts We Make the World: LP*

Mellow, background music easily enjoyable on a rainy, lazy kinda day. Jesse Rifkin's nasally voice sounds eerily similar to Weakerthan's John K. Samson, which was enough to win me over. Based out of Brooklyn, Jane Eyre compiled a year's worth of recordings experimenting with different contemporary and lo-fi sounds. Songs are intercut with phone conversations, keyboards, saxophone, folk harp, and organ. Synthesizers give the A-side a dreamy, sleepy vibe while the B-side seems more alternative and guitar-based. The LP has seven songs released through the band's own record label, A Landfill Full Of Records on a limited run of 500 multi-colored vinyl. Lo-fi art-rock for a sleepy couch

potato day. —Nicole Macias (A Landfill Full Of Records, janceyre.bandcamp.com, soundcloud.com/janceyrebk, janceyrebk@gmail.com)

#### JEHOVAH EYES: *Self-titled: 7"*

Jehovah Eyes are a Swedish band that brings the rock the same way predecessors like Randy and International Noise Conspiracy have—loud, exciting, and pseudo-radical. It might not be revolutionary (in any definition of the word) to sing lyrics like "we play dead/in front of the TV set/aw-oo/sitcom freedom!" but it sure sounds awesome. It's super catchy and clean with its choppy guitars and echoic, anthemic repeated chorus, "Sitcom freedom!" The b-side has an Urge Overkill feel to it, but rocks way harder. The lead singer belts some goofy lyrics about "living dead cities" with the group backing him up with some "waa-aahh-oooo's." Where they fall short in agitprop, they make up in rock and I approve of this message! —Craven Rock (Gaphals)

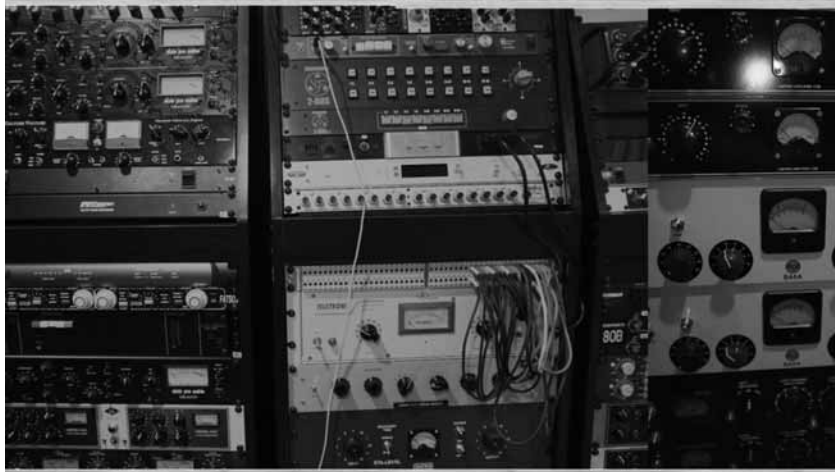
#### JOHN WAYNE IS DEAD:

##### *Rex T. Necord: 7"*

I sharpened my scalpels to dissect this record, because reviewing music is all about digging in and trying to figure out how all the parts fit together. When I sliced past the lo-fi, garage punk skin of these tunes, I got confused. Things aren't where they're supposed to be. Everything's put together weird. Are those strange ska veins running through it? Are those melted rockabilly

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kidneys? And that voice box, it's like one of those dudes with nicely emotive throats from a basement steampunk band decided to come out in the daylight and start banging on things. I poked and I prodded, but ultimately I decided that the best option was to put my tools down and just enjoy this baffling and beautiful bit of danceable madness. —MP Johnson (Bat Shit Crazy, johnwayneisdead.bandcamp.com)

#### KEVIN K AND THE KOOL KATS:

##### Allies: LP

Man, I just love Kevin K and always look forward to a new record. His mixture of early Ramones and The Heartbreakers is simply something that I can never get enough of. I am happy to see that things are the same on this great new LP. The addition of Ricky Rat from the Trash Brats on guitar is perfect. That is one pairing that just completely makes sense and should be no surprise to anyone familiar with this crew. Kevin K chugs along, putting out a fantastic record every year or so. He has built up quite a body of work, nearly all of which is worth the time of any punk rock'n'roll fan. —Mike Frame (Wanda, wandarecords.de)

#### LAST WORDS: Self-titled: LP

Last Words includes ex-members of Stripmines and Devour, both from Raleigh, NC, and there is no change from the uncompromising approach that both of those bands applied to their musical output on this debut album. The one big difference though is the

presence of vocalist Marina Madden. She sounds like she has been the subject of demonic possession and in the process also had her vocal cords vigorously sandpapered for good measure, leaving her with a distinctive presentation that verges on the unique. The interesting thing is—despite its raw quality—I find that Madden's vocals add a shade of light to the band which clearly differentiates it from the aforementioned combos that members have previously been in. Make no mistake, though. This is as spite-fuelled as one might expect but it is also relatively easy to listen to, if you know what I mean. This is excellent hardcore which rages from start to finish and it found a spot in my top ten album list for 2013 with something to spare. —Rich Cocksedge (To Live A Lie, info@tolivealie.com, tolivealie.com)

#### LAST WORDS: Self-titled: LP

The speckled black-and-white cover encapsulates the noise embedded on the vinyl: "LAST WORDS" adorns the bottom corner in thick sans serif font (read: Siege), the singer's arm is locked behind her back with the microphone buried in her teeth, and an aggro youth fist pumps with an X emblazoned on the back of his hand. It all seems so familiar—because it is. Consider this less a criticism of Last Words and more an observation of the over-reliance on same ol' same ol' hardcore iconography. (Also goes for leather jackets and brick walls, and parodies of the Black Flag bars.) Yet, Last

Words play competent powerviolence-influenced hardcore with cement grinder vocals. Reminds me of manic Japanese hardcore like Conga Fury or Washington, DC's Sick Fix. There's some serious talent in this band, and I found myself nodding to most of it, but some experimentation would go a long way towards distinguishing them from the rest. For now, the music leaves a soft impression. —Sean Arenas (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com, tolivealie@gmail.com)

#### LIPSTICK HOMICIDE: Out Utero: CD

When some dude in a Descendents shirt next tells me "women just can't play punk right," I'm going to make him listen to this. Initially, I wondered if this was an Asian Man release, because they'd be right at home on a bill with The Queers or Dog Party. Blasting out of Iowa City, this is shiny, rhymetastic pop punk propelled like a machine ever forward, but with a subtle bratty bite. On-point vocal harmonies that are almost too pro for a DIY band. Soaked with energy. Starting with "Vampire Club Pt II," the sugar sheen falls away and raw emotion punches through for great fuck-you moments. "I hope you have fun at your day job," they sneer on "So Happy for You." These are down-to-earth lyrics about real girl life and not feeling good enough. Definitely influenced by Dookie-era Green Day, and possibly the Soviettes or Bangs. *Out Utero* turns anti-future grunge symbols on their head and says, "Damn it, we're going to be happy." Shit just

got real. —Claire Palermo (Bloated Kat, bloatedkatrecords@gmail.com, bloatedkat.storenvy.com)

#### LIQUOR STORE: In the Garden: LP

I thought Liquor Store's debut LP *Yeah Buddy* was an exercise in hubris, but then I got this! *In the Garden* isn't a gatefold double LP like its predecessor, and only has eight tunes, but the sheer balls and triple-guitar bravado more than makes up for it. These are compliments, people. As my friend Jumpkick might say, this shit is "pow'ful." Guitarist/vocalist Sarim Al-Rawi's voice has changed from the snot-caked, bleating blurt of early Liquor Store tunes to a Handsome Dick Manitoba-like bark. The guitars (again, three of 'em!) are huge, the solos are monstrous. These dudes can hang with Dictators axe-men Top Ten and Ross The Boss, as well as give the Nuge ("Pile of Dirt") or Slash (check the epic "Midnight Walker") a run for their respective money. It's only in recent years that I've come to terms with strong musicians flexing their muscles while playing the punk rock. I don't know why I couldn't accept it for so long. Probably because so many technically proficient musicians don't know when a song doesn't need them to jack off all over it. Liquor Store is a band that can triple-guit a song and you can still feel the actual song. On a different tack, Liquor Store also scares me, more than a little bit. Listen to a tune like "Keys to the Face" and tell me you would even think about



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crossing these guys. Or maybe they're sweethearts and they just unfortunately witnessed some dude punch another dude with his keys. In the face. Then I look at a picture of Sarim, and his eyes tell me that he's seen something I shouldn't. —Sal Lucci (Almost Ready)

#### LONG KNIFE: *Wilderness*: LP

A homie of mine interviewed L.A. radio legend (and bassist for some of this city's finest and notorious bands) Adam Bomb on his internet radio show. Nice to hear his voice over the (digital) airwaves again and, of course, it led to daydreams of what a modern reboot of his once-crucial *Final Countdown* show would sound like. My guess is if that show were to again exist, this would be in heavy rotation. You've got a bevy of mid-tempo hardcore here that fuggin' drips with *War All the Time*-era Poison Idea, right down to the vocals, that sounds more like an extension of that idea than some cheap knockoff by a lesser band who have no business even attempting such an endeavor. No faint praise, that. Tight performance, great riffing, not too much metal in the geetars, and maybe even a hint of melody bubbling under there—high fives all 'round, kids. Oh, and Mr. Bomb, if yer readin' this, please get yourself back on the air and play the hell outta this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feral Ward)

#### LOVE TRIANGLE, THE: *Clever Clever*: LP

Some damn fine power pop-flavored punk rock from the U.K. The Love Triangle features the vocalist from

The Shitty Limits (on vocals, of course) backed up by some other guys who aren't as sellable. While there are some very catchy numbers such as "Hollywood Sleaze," "I'm Still Waiting for a Buzz," and "The Situation Is Excellent," the attitude contained herein is clearly that of a limey throwing two fingers right in your face whilst spitting out warm lager (that's what they call beer across the pond) in your general direction. Second sitting and not a stinker in the lot: do yourself a favor. —Juan Espinosa (Static Shock / Sorry State)

#### MAD CONDUCTOR: *MC Rises*: CD

This band from New Orleans came to me through a mutual friend when they needed a spot to crash on tour. With seven dudes and a dog in tow, Mad Conductor graciously showed up on my doorstep after a show in Seattle and handed me their album as thanks. What popped into my stereo is the most interesting self-produced hip hop I've heard in a long time. MC Devlin (of ska/crust band No Cash) fronts this project with a full backing band supplying the beats and hooks. Elements of flamenco guitar, piano, ska, and rock permeate this record with random sound effects sprinkled in. Devlin's voice, velvety and full, reminds me a lot of Q-Tip from A Tribe Called Quest and—besides a few background vocals (sometimes in Spanish)—he's flowing solo. Each track is lyrically exciting; packed with imagery and unconventional metaphors. One of my favorite lines

is on "One Solid Connection" where he spits: "I'll burn your bridge so you can't finish your song." With a mic in one hand and your full attention in the palm of his other, be prepared for anything because this record runs the gamut on things you didn't even know were possible. —Kayla Greet (Self-released, themadconductor.com)

#### MAKEOUTS: *"Hjärdöd" b/w "Du är så Punk": 7"*

Another Scandinavian masterpiece! The snow and cold might drive people into suicidal depression, but, man, does it make for some amazing guitar music. Hailing from Sweden, Makeouts play with an infectious sound similar to Jay Reatard and Audacity. The A-side on this record is one of the best punk songs I've heard all year! (Though to be fair, it is only February at the time of writing.) I could listen to this 7" forever. And there are two LPs left to listen to! I'm going to go hunt those down. Grade: A-. —Bryan Static (Bachelor, bachelorrecords.com)

#### MELT-BANANA: *Fetch*: CD

So here we have the highly anticipated new album from Melt-Banana and I have to say right out of the gate that this could be my favorite album of 2013. The last I heard of the band was 2000's *Teeny Shiny*, which I quite liked, though nothing would have prepared me for this. Fast-forwarding to *Fetch* sees the band expanding their sonic palette while simultaneously physically shrinking to a two-piece. The CD

is all over the place in a good way, with familiar elements like hardcore blending seamlessly with glitchy guitar loops and waves of noise creating not only a technical but a visceral coup on your earholes. The one thing that hasn't really changed much is vocalist Yasuko's piercing shriek, though she is able to exercise some restraint when called for, such as in the album's closer "Zero," which veers dizzily toward dance-pop bliss. —Garrett Barnwell (A-Zap, info@a-zap.com)

#### MESS//AGE: *Moments of Mayhem*: Cassette

Goddamn! Fifteen songs of raw, furious anarcho punk in thirty-ish minutes, straight outta Flensburg, Germany. MESS//AGE mixes tempos throughout, playing variant after variant of their angry, heartfelt message without sacrificing an iota of urgency. No matter whether their subject matter is personal or political, it's impassioned, with nary a stinker in the bunch. The hoarse, shouted vocals are reminiscent of Martin from Limp Wrist and/or the throat-shredding gentlemen from Assfactor 4. Great, great stuff I can't recommend highly enough. —Michael T. Fournier (message.bandcamp.com)

#### MICK FARREN AND ANDY COLQUHOUN: *Black Vinyl Dress*: CD

*Black Vinyl Dress* is amazing in its horribleness. This seriously flabbergasts me. It's as though the actor Alan Rickman (Severus Snape in *Harry Potter* and the villain in *Die*

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*Hard*)—the similarity of the voice is uncanny—got drunk, dropped acid, channeled whatever emotions he got from watching *Apocalypse Now*, wrote really bad Jim Morrison-inspired poetry and recited it with a nondescript band backing him. They then recorded an album and here I am, listening to it. I seriously can't stop laughing at every track, because I can't stop imagining a drunk and high Alan Rickman as the lead singer. Incredible. —Kurt Morris (Gonzo Multimedia, gonzomultimedia.co.uk)

#### MORMONS, THE: *We're Not Dead: 7"*

If you've been to any of the larger shows, festivals, and such in the greater L.A. area, chances are you've seen these long-time scene stalwarts—not on the main stage per se, more likely in the parking lot, with bullhorn, drums, guitars and amps strapped to their bodies as they play their way through in matching black pants, white button front shirts and bike helmets. I *highly* recommend you catch 'em in a more traditional live setting, though, where their sets are paradoxically ever more unhinged—last time I saw 'em, Patrick climbed into a plastic trashcan, hurled himself off the stage and continued howling through the rest of the song while rolling in-can around the dance floor, not missing a beat. This most recent single handily demonstrates they're more than a mere visual one-trick pony, they're a band with some serious chops: equal parts Voidoids, early Devo and the more sophisticated

wing of the San Gabriel Valley hardcore scene served up as tasty, driving punk that ain't afraid to work outside the box and follow their own muse(s). The two tracks here, "Eaters of Shit" and "Friend Detector," are culled from their *Forge Ahead* EP, also included in its entirety here via download, which sweetens the deal exponentially. It's goddamned criminal these kids aren't the toast of the town already and that this hasn't sold out several times over. Here's a chance to rectify that situation. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Mormons)

#### MR DAD: *Self-titled: 5"*

This sweet little morsel of a 5" comes from a scrappy garage punk band out of North Dakota. So how can I say this without this review going to shit, because I don't think Mr. Dad is shitty at all; they're pretty damn solid. The vocals have the similar sound and cadence to Zach de la Rocha from Rage Against The Machine... the screechy, good part of Zach de la Rocha, not the pretentious douchebag parts. Two solid thrashy alt garage punk songs on this little baby. Cover art is pretty rad. If I found this at a record store I would be intrigued. I would buy. And I would like it, which I do. You probably will, too. —Camille Reynolds (Self-released, mr.dadsucks@gmail.com)

#### MUNCIE GIRLS / THE GREAT CYNICS: *Split: 12"*

Here you have two of the U.K.'s leading lights in terms of the indie punk scene. The three Muncie Girls tracks

are easily the best sounding recordings the band has released. "Everyday" is my clear favorite with its easygoing catchiness and simplicity. It's a band that you'd never call boisterous but, hell, the songs are a great tonic for whatever ails you as they soothe and caress with a tenderness that is always welcome. Great Cynics is a band I took some time to acclimatize myself to but am now firmly on board these days. Although Giles Bidder's vocals are distinctive and enjoyable, the highlight for me is when bassist Iona Cairns takes centre stage on "Scariest Area," which is the stand out track on the record. —Rich Cockledge (Specialist Subject, Andrew@specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk, specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk)

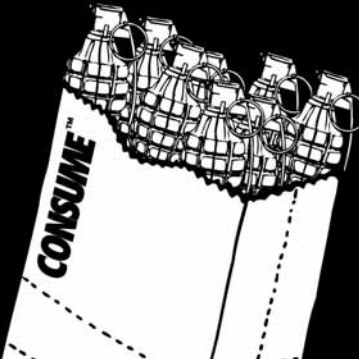
#### MUTOID MAN: *Helium Head: CD/LP*

Don't call it a super group; it's an awe-inspiring power trip. Mutoid Man (not to be confused with Olympia, Washington's Mutoid Men) is the duo of Stephen Brodsky (Cave In) on guitar and vocals and Ben Koller (Converge, Acid Tiger, All Pigs Must Die) on drums. Both musicians have taken a bit from each of their respective main acts (Cave In and Converge), showcased some Black Sabbath influence on the guitar and low-end (the album does have bass), and rolled it together to make a tight thrash album. Brodsky's vocals switch back and forth between screaming (think *Before Your Heart* Stops-era Cave In) and singing (more recent Cave In), and Koller's drumming is insane. He is without a doubt one

of the best drummers out there in the metal and hardcore scenes. Give this album a few listens, then go back and only focus on Koller's drumming. It's so complex and fast. He never takes an easy way out with simple fills. Then listen to the album some more and focus on Brodsky's guitar playing, which hasn't sounded this intense and technical in years. An especially noteworthy example of the complexity both members bring can be found on "Friday the 13/8" (written in a crazy 13/8 time signature, hence the title). There's not one song on this album that is a letdown. All seven tracks bring a force I haven't heard from many acts in the past few years. The only problem with *Helium Head* is its brevity. With a running time of seventeen minutes I could've stood another three to five tracks. Otherwise, this is fucking brilliant. —Kurt Morris (Magic Bullet, magicbulletrecords.com)

#### MXPX: *Left Coast Punk: 7"*

Thanks for reminding me why I haven't listened to skate punk in five years. It's hard to believe I received this piece of vinyl for review. Maybe the cultural tide has shifted enough and Razorcake has new readers who aren't aware of who MXPX are. Allow me to explain. MXPX play songs where the drummer uses the NOFX double bass drum beat, where the guitars follow the vocals to a fault, and the lyrics are sometimes about Jesus. It's pretty uninteresting. I'll give the band credit; they haven't changed into the



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slowed-down clones of themselves like so many other prominent bands of the '90s turned it, but it's not like they ever released anything worth caring about. Grade: D. —Bryan Static (Sexy Baby, sexybabyrecords.com/Rock City)

#### NEEDLES/PINS: *Out of This Place: 7"*

Every now and then a band comes into your life and you know it is something different and special. The first time I saw Needles/Pins, I had no idea who they were and I was seriously drunk off my ass. I thought they were amazing, bought a record, and I'm sure I slurred their ears off at the merch table. The next day in a (somewhat) more sober state, I put the record on and my jaw dropped. This band is fucking great! There is a lot of great things happening musically north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel and Needles/Pins might well be leading the march. Don't miss the boat on this one! —Ty Stranglehold (La Ti Da, latidarecords.com)

#### NEGATIVE TREND: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

Every now and then one gets a reissue for review that rightfully elicits a response along the lines of, "Well, great, what the fuck do I say about this that hasn't been said before?" Such is the case here. This seminal and seriously crucial piece of punk history from the band that spawned both Flipper and the Toiling Midgets is all scuzz, fuzz, venom, and virulence. Not to besmirch his efforts, but if you're only familiar with Rik L Rik-led versions of "Black and Red," "Meathouse," and "Mercenaries" featured on the

*Beach Blvd.* compilation, rest assured you haven't heard those tunes until you've cranked this bad boy up past polite volumes. This has been reissued numerous times in various formats, and this time 'round you get it in the original format with the original artwork intact. Can't find the pressing info, but I imagine it's limited in number, so I'd act fast before you end up banging your head in frustration when you can't find a copy that doesn't require you to sell off your first-born. —Jimmy Alvarado (Superior Viaduct)

#### NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS: *Total Dementia: 7"*

I have been thankful to Razorcake for lot of things over the years, but near the top of that list has to be the fateful day that I was sent a copy of the debut EP by (then) San Francisco's Neighborhood Brats. You can look up my review of that on the database (as well as reviews for every one of their following releases since I became a super-fan) to see how they instantly grabbed me and gave my head and ass a shake. This new 7" is a North American repress of their European tour single from last year and it proves the Brats have no intention of slowing down. If anything, they're picking up steam coming into 2014 with a new LP in the works. Pick this up and be sure to catch them live. It's an unforgettable experience! —Ty Stranglehold (Dirtnap)

#### NEKROMANTIKER: *Self-titled: LP*

To be completely honest with you, I think the vast majority of the current

noisecore thing happening is complete garbage. You and your pals may be all foaming at the mouth for the new Slick Turd and the Toilet Bowls mega limited cassette recorded underneath an overpass during rush hour now, but I can safely bet in another year, if even that, you are going to snap out of your stupor and wonder why in the hell you bought all these shitty records. And yet, as much as this genre is filled to the brim with crap, there are some diamonds amongst the refuse. Nekromantiker are one of the few you should actually check out, and even more crazy, buy their records because they do deserve more than a couple spins. Steeped in droning noise and raw as hell execution, there are actual songs underneath the chaos. Some aspects are catchy as well. Check out the bass in the song "Instru-Mental." On more than a couple occasions I was keeping time and bouncing around the room while listening to this. What I really like is how they incorporate sound effects into the songs and use them as though they are instruments. (Check out "Cocked Up" and the opener "You're Infected!" for two of the best examples.) Easy comparison would be Confuse. Which I definitely hear, but Nekromantiker aren't cookie cutter and sound like they're building on the genre and pushing it forward. —M.Avrq (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

#### NIGHTMARE BOYZZZ: *Up All Night: 7"*

Finally seeing the light of day on vinyl, Nightmare Boyzzz deliver just the

right dose on 7". Being nearby to their homebase, I've been able to catch quite a few NB live sets in many different band incarnations. The live sets have a punky spark with many of the Replacements legendary sets' qualities (fighting, copious drinking), but I've often found them dragging. I'll take the Boyzzz just like this: one neck breaker and two booty shakers. Fuzzy pop with those West Coast vocal delays and whoah-ohs. The sounds of drinking a twelve pack in your '64 Impala and then trying to slow dance with your partner at your senior prom. —Matt Seward (Fat Sandwich, fatsandwichrecords.com)

#### NOFX: *Stoke Extinguisher: 7"/CDEP*


I never was a NOFX fan. I never gave them a chance. The people in high school who listened to them never seemed real cool; they were always posers. That being said, I actually liked this. Go figure. The 7" is only two songs, a new track, "Stoke Extinguisher," and the band's contribution to *The Songs of Tony Sly: A Tribute*, titled "The Shortest Pier." The CDEP and digital versions include four other songs from recent NOFX 7"s. Overall, it's six songs in thirteen minutes. If you're a die-hard NOFX fan, then you may prefer the 7" version, since it has the new song and you probably already have the rest of the songs. If you're like me and have never given NOFX much of a chance, this is a good mix of their recent material and might be worth you checking out. The songs are catchy, some are a little more aggressive, and




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of course there's a good dose of humor, too. —Kurt Morris (Fat Wreck Chords)

#### NORTH TROLLS: *Sup: LP*

This one caught me off guard like a sucker punch to the cranium. I was initially put off by the atrocious cover—a poorly Photoshopped collage featuring an eagle, twenty dollar bills, a pair of assault rifles, a roller coaster, and two greasy slices of pepperoni pizza—but the design may also be brilliant. Atrocious because the resolution blows, brilliant because all those things are the American Dream, right? *Right*. Besides, the cover lowers all expectations to a subterranean level. But then the first song starts, and it's immediately infectious. The vocals have the ideal amount of twang and snot, à la Violent Femmes. The sort of slacker angst inflections that make you believe you can sing every note. And you will want to—assuming you can digest tongue-in-cheek silliness. Luckily, North Trolls aren't musical slackers either as they run the gamut from garage punk to grunge balladry to Cheap Trick pop rock. The varying styles avoid parody, and across the board the choruses are tight and the hooks fit snug. Definitely one of my favorite and most out of the blue pop records of 2013. —Sean Arenas (No Breaks, [order@nobreaksrecords.com](mailto:order@nobreaksrecords.com))

#### NOTS: *Self-titled: 7"*

This EP is on constant rotation. Already had this in my collection before I was asked to review it, so

lucky me! Gnarly, all XX, awesome, sloppy garage punk. Bass- and drum-heavy with surfy distorted guitar. Heaven. Has members from Ex-Cult, Manatees, and Moving Finger. Dig any of these bands? Then this is for you! —Camille Reynolds (Goner)

#### NU, POGODI / CHOOSE YOUR POISON: *Fuck My Womb I'm Calling in Dead: 7"*

This is kind of a dream come true for me. One of my most common reviewing techniques is to invent an obscure cartoon and say that the band is named after it, using the theme of the cartoon as a metaphor for what the band is about. But I don't need to do that with Nu, Pogodi, because the band is actually named after an obscure Russian cartoon about a fucked up, chain-smoking wolf who spends his days chasing after an absurdly wide-eyed rabbit. The band isn't exactly cartoonish though. Through a pummeling barrage of harsh core, they delve into topics that are all too realistic, about being an outsider and looking for acceptance within. On the other side is Wisconsin's Choose Your Poison, who deliver "Calling in Dead," a sweet shout-along hardcore tune, and a couple other fast and wild stompers that are over in the blink of an eye. —MP Johnson (Active Rebellion)

#### NUDES: *Sister: 7" EP*

Things start off a-flailin and a-whoopin', with some hyper-speed thrash setting the pace. Then, however, they immediately shift back into low

gear for the remainder of the ride, meting out some heavy hardcore whomps stuffed with paranoia and virulence. Fuckin' rad, though I'm gonna have a hard time explaining all the fist-sized holes in the wall. —Jimmy Alvarado (Inimical)

#### OBNOX: *Three Times Dope EP: 7" EP*

Obnox is a rather prolific project from Bim Thomas of Bassholes and This Moment In Black History. I have no idea where this falls on the Obnox trajectory, or whether it reflects the rest of the output under this moniker, but that aside, this one's got three powerful garage punk rockers with a slight psychedelic bent plainly hidden beneath a lack of fidelity—like champion level lacking. The two originals are stellar, and Obnox offer up a fantastic, personalized cover of the Spiders' "Don't Blow Your Mind" that fits well next to Bim's own work. Huge catalogs are always intimidating to me, but I might just have to investigate into this one a bit more, especially if more of this is possible. —Vincent (Southpaw, [southpaw-records.com](http://southpaw-records.com))

#### PAGE OF PUNK, A / WEREWOLVES ON MOTORCYCLES: *Japan Tour: 7"*

A Page Of Punk starts off with a couple songs of shout-along thrash, then slows it down for some anthemic punk on the final few (Yes, they contributed seven songs to this record). There are gang vocals everywhere, and the music is punchy and clear. It's impossible not to smile at this, especially "No War

No Cry." From Japan, Werewolves On Motorcycles are from the English town Stoke-on-Trent, which I Googled, and got these recent headlines: "£1 houses: the starting price to bring hope back to Stoke-on-Trent's streets" and "Is Stoke-on-Trent home to the nation's worst view?" along with a piece on "badger culling." Their sound is darker and angrier, with songs about cops and masturbation. —Chris Terry (Drunk Sailor, [drunksailorrecords.co.uk](http://drunksailorrecords.co.uk))

#### PAGE OF PUNK, A: *Fool's Punk Line: LP*

Last year I was floored when A Page Of Punk put twelve songs on one side of a 7". Well, they're back with a full-length! A forty-nine song LP! You really gotta be in the right mood (slightly drunk?) for their brand of blasting, over-the-top punk bursts that start and finish with rapid nail-gun precision. Rarely breaking the minute mark, but not without their tempo changes, this isn't blurcore, this is punk. Concise and explosive. I love how playful it sounds while still having *piissssed* off lyrics. I've also heard some wild tales of their live shows, which sound like as much of a spectacle as a forty-nine song LP. In the end, they're doing such a good job with such a ridiculous premise, you can't help but love it. Crack a beer or six, strap yourself in, and never forget the lyrics to the song "Keep Rockin' Fuck Off!" which read as such: "Keep rockin' / Keep rockin' / Fuck off!!!" —Daryl (Drunk Sailor, [drunksailorrees@gmail.com](mailto:drunksailorrees@gmail.com))

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**PAGERIPPER: Self-titled: 7"**

Dense, brief, and crazed while still holding on to an undercurrent of melody. It's a strange combo, and it works really well here. They're a great live band, but this 7" does a terrific job at capturing that intriguing "bomb in a roll of bubblewrap" combination. If you took the vocals and whip-smart angularity of Glass And Ashes and combined it with the Sainte Catherine's, with all of that band's effluvia sanded off and whittled down to the essentials, you'd be looking at something like Pageripper. It's a weird cross-section of sounds that shouldn't necessarily work, but does. Excellent production: it's gritty, but layered enough to document the nuances. Thorough packaging. This is a relatively new label, I think, but it's clear that everyone involved, band and otherwise, put a lot of effort into this release. Recommended. —Keith Rosson (Sex Sheet)

**PANIC BEATS, THE: Rest in Pieces: LP**

Uninspired, out of tune Ramonescore built on the overdone premise of singing from a violent criminal's perspective. The market for this stuff is getting a little crowded. It certainly doesn't inspire confidence that not a single song on this record seems to be made with any effort. I could have sworn I just reviewed an LP by these guys and I'm pretty sure if you took all of the best songs from those two LPs and put them on the same album, you'd have like three songs. I want to like this, I really do, but it's not pleasant to

listen to. Grade: D-. —Bryan Static (P. Trash, ptrashrecords.com)

**PANIC BEATS, THE: Without Warning: LP**

If you took the monomaniacal devotion to form of the Riverdales/Head/maybe Teenage Bottlerocket, dirtied it up somewhat, and added the overgrown adolescent fascination with murder that made the Zodiac Killers so... uh... special, then you'd probably have something reasonably akin to this, although starting things off with an instrumental suggests that the Rip Offs *Got a Record* played a role in shaping the minds of these leaders of tomorrow. This album includes songs about killing girls' boyfriends, killing with their girlfriends, and killing with no overt boyfriend/girlfriend component, but, so far, all this record has impelled me to kill is the volume. BEST SONG: "They Call Me Death." BEST SONG TITLE: "Bash His Brains." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Cover art by Rick Melton, for those who can't get enough rumps and knives! —Rev. Nørð (P. Trash, ptrashrecords.com)

**PANZRAM: Judgment Night Soundtrack: Cassette**

Gotta confess I wasn't expecting much from this cassette based on the packaging. The cover has an ugly-ass foot on it and, along with the title, my mind kind of decided that this was going to be a so-so, pseudo-industrial soundscape. Boy was I ever surprised when I plopped this baby into my vintage

1989 cassette deck. What greeted me was a ferocious mix of Flipper-styled cacophony, downtuned guitars, and some of the most intensely personal lyrics I can remember coming across. It goes without saying then that I freakin' love this cassette. My only complaint though is that the low-fi nature of the recording really doesn't do justice to the quieter interludes within the songs. Regardless, this is highly recommended. —Garrett Barnwell (Human Crush, hiszeroisgone@yahoo.com)

**PERMANENT RUIN: Mas Alla De La Muerte: 7"**

This is the second 7" for this Bay Area band. I missed the first, and now I have to track that sucker down because this thing is fucking FAN-TAST-IC. The label mentions previous bands these folks have been in (Condenada, In Disgust, Sourpatch) but this band has their own sound and the "ex-members of" tag may even sell them short. The riffs are absolutely raw and raging with a dark, menacing vibe not unlike N/N with sick blast beats that call to mind Despire You. I love the way that the songs don't break down when you expect and don't move in the direction they seem to be heading. This is an engaging listen and even though the riffs seem simplistic, it's certainly not "by the book" hardcore. The lyrics are to-the-point depictions of abuse and reactions. There is a feeling of being broken and lashing out for just causes in the way the lines seem to yell at the protagonist instead of the world,

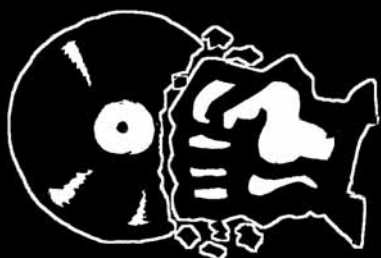
especially on the last track "Corporal Punishment." There is supposedly a third 7" in the works on Not Normal. I hope these people continue to churn this stuff out and this isn't just a short-lived side project band. —Ian Wise (Warthog Speak)

**PETER GUTTERIDGE: Pure: 2 x LP**

*Pure* is an important reissue. If you're unfamiliar with Peter Gutteridge, he's something of an overlooked figure in New Zealand music. He's been in The Clean, The Chills, and The Great Unwashed—although his main creative outlet has been Snapper. *Pure* was originally released as a cassette on Bruce Russell's Xpressway label back in '89. (Although defunct, if you're unacquainted with Xpressway, I cannot recommend the label enough.) *Pure* finds Gutteridge handling the bulk of instrumentation, with occasional help from Snapper bandmates and George Henderson of The Puddle. Two of the songs on *Pure* were rerecorded for Snapper's *Buddy* EP (1988), but most of the material here is unavailable elsewhere. *Pure* sounds like a Snapper home recording: distorted keyboards and vocals with drum machines (I'm admittedly stretching it here, but think of a gritty version of Stereolab). Gutteridge did his own thing. New Zealand had a very vibrant scene built around jangly guitars and deep pop hooks in the '80s. Dubbed the "Dunedin Sound," it was a very fertile time for NZ music. With Snapper and *Pure*, Gutteridge created music

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equally compelling, albeit completely different from most of the records on Flying Nun at the time. Thanks to 540 Records, this hard-to-find cassette is readily available on vinyl (a double LP to boot). The cost of putting this reissue together had to be immense, more of a reason to pick up *Pure*. —Ryan Leach (540, chaosintejas.bigcartel.com)

#### PLEASURE LEFTISTS: Self-titled: 12" EP

Loved their single, and that sentiment is amplified threefold along with the three tracks that accompany the two from the single on this EP. More bass-heavy post-punk for your ear hole, with all-but-unintelligible wailing vocals, loping bass, and danceable-yet-not-dancey rhythms. The tunes are hypnotic and catchy, moody without being out 'n' out goth, redolent without being rote. Back slaps all around; they've got another winner here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

#### POISON IDEA: *Kings of Punk (Bloated Edition): CD*

When you look at an album cover and see a bovine-like beer belly carved up with X-acto gashes that crudely spell out a band's name, you can rest assured that, by buying this particular recording, you're getting a genuine strain of hardcore nihilistic punk that will tear your nostrils open, separate the meat from your skull, and pin the ragged flaps of your face back against your ears. The photograph of Jerry A's X-acto work in scarification

"branding" on the *Kings of Punk* cover is like the *Good Housekeeping* seal for punk nihilism; it tells you in no uncertain terms: this is the most "rotten, dirty, damnable, filthy, putrid, filth" your money can buy—satisfaction guaranteed. Now of course, whether or not the malcontents in Poison Idea were really proper "nihilists" is debatable. They were most likely not nihilists in the sense that I don't think any of them ever spent nights curled up on the couch with some Lorna Doone cookies and a good Max Stirner book. I seriously doubt they read much of anything outside of maybe a beer-stained Bukowski book or two. But if one is to believe the snuff-spittled rantings of the famous Hillbilly Hot Head, self-styled nihilist and all-around professional "Bad Man," Jim Goad, both Pig Champion and Jerry A were drunken, thieving, drugged-up, hypocritical Man Mountains of amorality. Specifically, Goad claims that a certain Tom Roberts (aka Pig Champion) rattled him out to the fuzz, resulting in Goad landing in jail for an extra zealous bit of performance art wherein he beat up his girlfriend. Particularly bad form, says Jimbo, for the seemingly earnest composers of several brutal anti-cop/anti-snitch ditties like "The Badge" from the *Feel the Darkness* album. He also makes more broad claims that, while P.I. bassist Myrtle Tickner was merely a "sweet drunk," Pig and Jerry were both luridly conniving smack addicts who would turn on anyone for a quick fix.

Of course, I have no way to gauge the veracity of Goad's accusations, but it seems at least plausible that his strident protestations are little more than the attention-getting "I'm-Badder-Than-You" bellows of a person looking for a little more notoriety to heap on his already "dangerous" reputation. Don't forget, Jim Goad was a reality TV type personality before reality TV even existed. And, seriously, can anyone with a straight face call Jerry A and Pig Champion *gutless*? But even if Goad is right in portraying them as dangerously obese back-stabbing junkies, they at least weren't sickly, simpering little heroin-chic nihilists hunched and on the nod in some dark corner somewhere, watching their own grey drool accumulate in their navels; these were rotund, heavy-breathing brutes whose every blackened fat cell was bursting at the seams with utter nihilistic rage like Mamma June—a Goadian Hillbilly heroine herself—bursting at the seams from a particularly gluttonous session of pork rind binge eating. And that comes through each and every song on *Kings of Punk* like a runaway herd of rutting bull elephants trampling Jeep-fulls of ivory poachers underfoot. What more can be said about this album that hasn't already been said? Eleven sternum-cracking, just-don't-give-a-fuck, meat-nado classics from the Billy and Benny McCrary (look 'em up, you have a smart phone) of hardcore punk and a memorable album cover guaranteed to pop into your mind every time you take

a sharp knife and cut up a nice plump hotdog. Plus, with this re-mastered re-release from Southern Lord/TKO, you get an additional all-you-can-eat smorgasbord of previously unreleased live recordings, circa 1984-1986. So with this double disc version of *Kings of Punk* you can listen to the very dark sounds of raging drunk-junkie nihilism until the cows come home. There are even freshly-penned liner notes from Mr. Jerry A, detailing the back story to the stomach-slicing photo shoot and including a proud profession that he *has* not mellowed with age and is, in fact, more pissed off than ever. I've watched enough classic WWF to know a thinly veiled challenge when I hear one. By the time this issue of *Razorcake* hits the streets, cocky rapper DMX should've already pounded celebrity killer George Zimmerman into Alpo at the Celebrity Boxing event. I say that next up, as a way of promoting their on-going series of "extra gravy" classic Poison Idea re-releases, Southern Lord should try to orchestrate a Celebrity Nihilist Death Match between Jim Goad and Jerry A. And let's put in a stipulation allowing X-acto knives. Whaddya say guys? Do it for Pig. —Aphid Peewit (Southern Lord, southernlord.com)

#### PRINCE: Self-titled: 7"

So yeah, they named themselves Prince. Why? Bunch of stoners. I don't usually like something this poppy, but, damn, I think this is good. Clean, melodic, and incredibly catchy, especially "Young Americans" on Side A. It's probably



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their best song on this 7". I can say, though, after playing a couple shows with these guys, they really do possess the "it" factor live: the energy, talent, and rawness is not captured in this recording. They are way the fuck better than this recording, so I'm looking forward to what's next for them.  
—Camille Reynolds (No Breaks)

**PUSRAD: *Modern Anatomy: 7" EP***

Another salvo of hits from a cabal of punkers responsible for Swedish hardcore darlings Raped Teenagers as well as more current bands like Flakes and TV Eye. As can be expected given their pedigree, what yer getting is first class ADD-core tunes—the longest here clocks in at an epic minute-and-change—delivered tight as nails with rhythmic hiccups abounding, but blink and it's time to flip the disc over.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Signalier Fran Ovan, andymongoloid@yahoo.se)

**PYGMIES, THE: *Self-titled: LP***

Alright! Second album time from this fantastic Calgary band, made up of ex-Neckers and Chixdiggit members. I could not be more pleased to report that although the band has been fleshed-out from two members to a full four-piece band, the results are absolutely stellar. This is—quite simply—top-shelf garage rock with power pop influences and phenomenal songwriting. The keyboards add to the sound, which is a rarity in my experience, and they are just perfect in the mix as well. Fans of bands like Muck And The Mires

and Mondo Topless will find a whole lot to like with the Pygmies. Anyone who is into strong power pop and great backing vocals will wanna be all over this. Bands from Canada are just better. Here is another shining example.  
—Mike Frame (Self-released)

**RÄJÄYTÄJÄT: *Self-titled: LP***

Good, trashy punk, like most any other artistic endeavor, first and foremost needs a heaping dose of conviction—you can pretty much sell any crap with just a smidge and you're only ensuring a long, faceless stay in the dung heap of mediocrity without it. Like Teengenerate, the Reds, and others working that side of the road, these cats are well aware of this rule and go out of their way to make sure this disc is sweating barrels full of both conviction and chutzpah. Taking cues from early Stones (even going so far as to quote "The Last Time" at one point) and all the usual suspects, they intersperse heaps of audio samples more often heard on a Crass compilation between tracks and flail in wild abandon when the actual songs kick in, with live-wire energy levels and howling aplenty. Guaranteed to clear out yer next clambake of all but the most hearty and coolest of yer crew.  
—Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

**RAKTA: *Self-titled: 12" EP***

Tough one to describe here. Which is a good thing, really. I hear strong death rock elements in the percussion and bass, and occasionally in the guitar.

Then there's this really wide and blown-out post-punk, post-rock, post-whatever, sort of art-damaged, vibe that dominates the sound that keeps everything from getting too dark and too heavy. Things really get interesting around songs like "Life Comes from Death" with its creepy graveyard organ sound, and the lumbering "Secret" where the bass has a loose and dark edge that takes the sound into the depths. Then there are the vocals in that song that have this distant dream feel. So good... Unfortunately, the songs "Ganex; Black Mob" and "Caverna" run too long and bog things down, killing the mood established by the previous songs. "Caverna" has its moments, and is more focused than "Ganex," but neither song fit well with the previous four. Maybe it's a matter of having to spend more time with these songs. Whatever the case, the material on the first side is definitely worth your time.  
—M.Avrq (Nada Nada, nadanadadiscom.com)

**RATIONAL ANTHEM: *Whatevermind: LP***

The "it" factor. Music folks have been looking for the formula for decades with limited results. The best bands (like The Brokedowns, Dan Padilla, Rumspringer) play styles that are all too familiar, but for some reason can push both hands into your chest and push your heart through your mouth. Add Rational Anthem to the list. *Whatevermind* takes the lyrical strength of Black Flag's "Depression" and

grinds it through haunting bubblegum punk tuneage so you're drunk singing through the tears and smiling through today's suck, ready for tomorrow because the Rational Anthem LP is still on the turntable. I'm late to the party, but oh well, never, whatevermind...

—Matt Seward (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com / John Wilkes Booth, johnwilkesboothrecords.com / Kiss Of Death, kissofdeathrecords.com / Bloat Kat, bloatkatkat.storenvy.com)

**RAYDIOS, THE: *No Expectation: 7"***

I've always imagined Teengenerate and New Bomb Turks to be Japanese/American equivalents of each other. Both bands blasting out rip-roaring, fuzzed-out punk rock'n'roll heat that will make your hair stand on end and your ass shake. Later on in their career, the Turks began tackling some more mid-tempo, bluesy punk rock mixed in with their speed assault with fine results. That's where The Raydios come in. Members of Teengenerate are doing something new, and as you would expect, rocking. Like I said above, the tunes here are more akin to the Stones-like swagger that the Turks were throwing down at the turn of the century and, also like the Turks, The Raydios pull it off with style. I want more than just three songs, and I'd love to see them tour over this way.  
—Ty Stranglehold (Secret Mission, secretmissionrecords.com)

**REGIMEN: *Self-titled: LP***

One of the pitfalls of reviewing gobs of releases over extended periods of

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time is that one can create mental snapshots of a particular scene/country's music scene that might be a bit fallacious. Let's take Sweden, for example. From Mob 47 to DS-13 to Regulations to AC4 to—well, you get the point—one inevitably forms a vision of an entire country packed with both snow and an entire population that is born and bred on a steady diet of Discharge and had embedded in its DNA the ability to effortlessly churn out some of the best punk/hardcore on the planet. I'm willing to bet large sums of money this isn't true, and I have heard my share of less than stellar output from that region, but one making such a leap of logic wouldn't exactly be out of the realm of possibility. Regimen does nothing to counter such a leap. With a bevy of (mostly) mid-tempo ragers that are inexplicably catchy amidst all the screaming and slamming, ye find yourself shaking an angry fist and shouting along with the Swedish gang-choruses that pop up like whack-a-mole heads, and at other times shimmy-slammng to many of the tunes' odd surfy undertow. No, Sweden can't be a punk paradise—c'mon, the law of averages dictates that there has to be at least one square block in that country that is infested with shitty bands—but this definitely makes it easier for some of us to dream such a thing is possible. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gaphals, gaphals.se)

#### RENO DIVORCE: *Lovers Leap*: CD

It's been awhile since we've last heard from Reno Divorce, the Colorado-based outfit led by Brent Loveday but here we are; a new CD thanks to the wonders of crowd-sourcing and Kickstarter. It looks like the band has an entirely new lineup since the last album, but maybe I am wrong. This stuff veers dangerously close to Social Distortion territory and Loveday himself sounds so similar to Mike Ness that it can be distracting. I cannot deny, though, that Loveday has really grown as a songwriter. I really think he could use someone to help him edit though, either a producer or another strong songwriter to help smooth out the rough spots, like some of the curious lyrical choices he makes. —Garrett Barnwell (Rusty Knuckles)

#### RVIVR: *The Beauty Between*: LP

RVIVR is one of the best things to come out of Olympia, WA. They are a gender-balanced four piece (two guys, two girls) who harmonize with each other and play to a tight, driving beat while belting out some very inspiring lyrics. I feel that if music could give you a hug and tell you not only that things will be okay, but things will awesome, RVIVR would be the arms that held you. Their songs focus on change for the better while not letting life's daily bullshit get you down. There is a fine tuned dichotomy between Matt and Erica's vocals; the male vocals are euphoric and heartfelt while the female vocals are coarse and raspy. Coupled by strong lead

and rhythm guitar parts, they create a marriage of melody. Together, it sounds wonderful. "Spider Song" is far and away the most important track on this record for me. It deals with relationships that are not necessarily on the outs, but rather slowly losing relevance for both parties. "You can love someone and just not stay friends," is a centerpiece lyric from this song. It also focused on self-growth and being okay in your own skin. On the B-side there's a trilogy of darker themes called "The Hunger Suite" which pulls empathy right out of you. This triplet of tracks (subtitled "Go Away," "Bleed Out," and "Hunger") transport the listener through feelings of utter abandon, self-deprecation, and a satiable urge for recovery. The lyric "I get so low, solo" in "Go Away" gets challenged with "Magic's not gone from the world, it's just harder to find" in "Bleed Out," ending with "We want to be well" in "Hunger." Musically, even through lyrics of pain and loneliness, RVIVR stays bright and uplifting with pop punk sensibilities, inviting you to sing along every step of the way. They recognize the difficulty in balancing contentment and depression and manage to find the beauty between. —Kayla Greet (Rumbletowne, punks@rumbletowne.com)

#### SATAN PANONKSI:

##### *Hard Blood Shock*: LP

Satan Panonski, a.k.a Ivica Čuljak, was quite a figure in Croatian and

Yugoslavian punk in the eighties and nineties. Before he was turned on to punk, he was a delinquent kid sent off to a reform school in Germany. There he discovered punk and introduced it to his homeland in the crudest and most extreme of forms. He called his style of punk "Hard Blood Shock," dressed in drag, and cut himself with razors on stage while singing songs with subject matter such as rough sex, violence, and incest. It gets more interesting from there. During a dispute, a mafia guy starting messing with his brother. Ivica stabbed the man and killed him. He was sentenced to twelve years hard time for murder, but due to his struggles with addiction and madness, he was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder and transferred from prison to a mental institution. There he had access to musical instruments and recording equipment and could get day passes to play with his band. He was released early in 1989, only to have his country erupt into the Croatian War of Independence. He joined the Croatian army to protect his family, but became increasingly nationalist as the atrocities went on. He was mysteriously killed by a gunshot wound and it, according to the Croatian Army, was an accident, but some believe he was fraged. It's a wild story, to say the least. Unfortunately, drama doesn't always make for great music. In spite of its spirited attitude, its amateurish and uninteresting at best and intolerably annoying at worst. Not liking it upon first spin, I thought I might be getting soft. After all, it could just

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be a challenging record, like something The Gerns or Rudimentary Peni would make. So I gave it a few more spins. On an agreeable night I could dig the first couple of songs, sort of, but from there it gets more experimental and it's just ill-conceived. There's a lot of a lot minimal guitar riffing with Panonski's annoying caterwaul. If you could imagine the aural equivalent of Panonski's lyrics about sucking off his dad, that's what it sounds like. —Craven Rock (S.S.)

#### SECRET SMOKER:

##### **Terminal Architecture: LP**

This three-piece from Baton Rouge play emotive hardcore in the vein of Chino Horde and Current. It's a long-familiar and adept style of emo—not quite throwback, not quite a full evolution. The guitarist juggles clean, twinkly precision and distortion with unpredictable palm-muted chugs. Meanwhile, the fluid bass lines and dead-on drumming create a proper home for the intermittent jaw-clenched vocal delivery. The high-strung portions evoke The Nation Of Ulysses, but the restrained technical prowess overrides any fury. It's all beautifully inventive and carefully orchestrated. "Bench Drop" is a highlight, as it showcases the most harnessed and unleashed facets of Secret Smoker's sound. It would tickle my fancy to hear them hit harder the next time around, but, regardless, they've crafted an unmistakably defined identity in a recently reinvigorated genre. It's

exciting to hear a band that hasn't so much reinvented the wheel, but instead installed some shiny spinners on a classic car. Got mine on a gorgeous clear vinyl. Recommended. —Sean Arenas (Protagonist, protagonistmusic.com / Adagio830, adagio830.de)

#### SHRIEKS, THE:

##### **Blood and Lunacy: CDEP**

The Shrieks are a female horrorbilly (or psychobilly? I don't know the correct "billy" uses) from Helsinki, Finland. There has been an awful lot of this stuff coming out in the last few years, and it can get tiresome. Luckily, The Shrieks manage to get a step ahead of the majority with good songs and interesting-sounding vocals. If you are a fan of any type of "billy," I reckon you might like it. —Ty Stranglehold (The Shrieks, facebook.com/theshrieks)

#### SIMPLE CIRCUIT: Self-titled: CD

This band reminds me a lot of The Intelligence. In fact, the first song on this record sounds like it was lifted straight off the *Males* LP. Additionally taking cues from bands like The Fall—as well as other contemporary fuzzy-yet-pop-based garagey punk bands like Tyvek and Thee Oh Sees—results in a great debut full length from these guys and girl. There are thirteen songs total of angular post-punk goodness here, every single one a gem. This is absolutely, undoubtedly, recommended. —Mark Twistworthy (Simple Circuit, simplecircuit.bandcamp.com)

#### SLABS, THE:

##### **Feed Our Dirty Dark Souls: Cassette**

C'mon, gang. Look, I understand the urge, and I'm a cheerleader for it: everyone should be in a band, do what you can with what you have, blah blah blah, but shit or get off the pot. Seriously, for a band who obviously cares so much about what their listeners think about their image to put out such a clumsy, unlistenable mess in the name of "keeping it real" is a waste. There's at least a little bit of money in the presentation, what with its lovingly wrought '60s psych-inspired graphic design and screen printed tapes. There are times, too, when if I squint my ears I can hear glimmers of trashy glam songwriting potential, unfortunately reduced to a dull thud by the horrific "recorded straight to a General Electric boombox" mix (their words, not mine) which sounds like wrapping a bunch of blown speakers in bubble wrap. But between the disparity of care in packaging and recording, I just don't buy any of this. I can't. It's too contrived. The corny, canned between-song banter, which includes tuning and lame in-jokes before the music starts, makes it sound like these guys want to be playing a live show but can't muster an audience, yet are so full of themselves that they assume listeners will sift through their proudly shitty, trying-too-hard "we don't care" bullshit for a negligible mess of a yield. Nice cover, though. —Michael T. Fournier (Shake!)

#### SLACK BIRD:

##### **Turvallisuuden Onnettomuus: 7"**

As broad as my punk rock umbrella is, it's not quite wide enough to cover this slosh of Finnish folk... but for the sake of not having the argument "what is punk?" it sounds like Tom Waits to a Finnish folk polka beat. Sounds cool? Then you *get it*, but I still don't. —Camille Reynolds (Parta, partarecords.com)

#### SLOW DEATH, THE / BROKEDOWNS, THE: Split 7"

Perfect. I've been waiting for this record since it was announced last year. It's a match made in heaven. Take the lyrics of my favorite Brokedowns song, "Done with Funk," where they sing, "Slow death! We're all choking on the slow death!" In my humble opinion, the Brokedowns can do no wrong at this point. It's been three years since their last LP, but they've tided us over with splits with a number of fantastic artists. The roster of bands that have done splits with the Brokedowns is better than most modern record labels. The Slow Death provide a nice counterpoint to the heavy hardcore-inspired punk that the Brokedowns lay down, but even The Slow Death seem pulled into the sonic vortex of The Brokedowns, offering three of their heaviest offerings I've heard from them. If you are a fan of modern punk and you haven't checked out either of these bands, you are doing yourself a great disservice. Grade: A. —Bryan Static (Red Scare, redscare.net)



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**SMOOTH BRAIN: One of Them: 7"**

I've never visited Cleveland. Judging by this record, which features members of bands like 9 Shocks Terror and Pleasure Leftists, I have a feeling that they have a very specific method of partying. That method probably results in getting black and blue. Is happy-angry a thing? Because that's how I'd describe this—emphasis on the angry. Sort of like, "Well, I don't want to be at this party, but I'm here so I might as well kick holes in the walls because that would make me feel good." Maybe happy isn't the right word. It's more like reveling in the anger, taking pleasure from it, thriving on it, and asking everyone else to do the same by singing along. Whether you do or you don't, you're probably not leaving without a bruise. —MP Johnson (Dead Broke)

**SNEEZZBIL, THE: Self-titled: CD**

When I was in high school, there was a point when all the band kids got into Primus. Bass strings started getting slapped every which way in the creation of quirk-filled songs fueled by awkward adolescent angst. One of those bands has apparently found a time machine and shipped itself straight to 2014, and of course the reliably what-the-fuck 1332 has put out a five-song EP featuring such brilliant tunes as "Shotgun," in which the narrator is upset because he called shotgun and apparently didn't get shotgun. Appropriately, it all ends in a rant about the TV show *Who's the Boss?* —MP Johnson (1332)

**SONIC ABUSE: Still Pissed: 7" EP**

Off the top of my head, I can only think of two references to Munich, Germany. There is the Steven Spielberg-directed film, called *Munich*, where Eric Bana goes around blowing the shit out of terrorists. And then there is Sonic Abuse, the punk band from Munich, Germany whose debut EP I have the pleasure of listening to right now. The only scene I remember from the movie is when an antagonist lays down on his hotel bed, not knowing the mattress springs are rigged to an explosive. Seconds later, his torso—sans limbs—is hanging from the ceiling fan, slowly spinning, dripping blood. Sonic Abuse is kind of like that, only the fan is spinning much faster than any domestic ceiling fan ought to, causing the blood to fly and creating a circle of carnage on the cream-colored hotel walls. This album is fast, unrelenting, raw power but the songwriting is not without a sense of humor. If you read the lyrics, for they are far too fast to understand and contemplate, you would hear nods to getting laid, hating jazz music, genocidal icemen from outer space, and Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. —John Mule (Munich Punk Shop, munich-punk-shop.de)

**SPERM: Nightmare Life: Cassette**

This really cool, really bizarre, really short six-song hardcore demo from Buffalo is full of intentional idiosyncrasies. With stylistic influences ranging from Antisocialism to Minutemen, there is a lot of diversity

packed in. Apparently, they already have a second tape available as well. A nifty cassette shell with no labeling other than images of spermatozoa tops off this worthy release. Balls have sperm and Sperm has balls. —Art Ettinger (Self-released, spermbuffalo.bandcamp.com)

**STATE OF FRANKLIN:****Optimistic Despite the Evidence: CD**

Not to be confused with another band called Lost State Of Franklin, this duo specialize in low-fi chunky pop punk that reminds me of Dinosaur Jr. in some regards. Songs such as "Ringo's Eyebrow" and "Neil Young's Camaro" display a keen sense of humor which I fully welcome. I don't really know why, but for me this CD evokes feelings of the East Coast in the winter—bare trees, grey skies, stocking caps, and seeing your breath. Good stuff. Bonus points for the Ben Snakepit band portraits. —Garrett Barnwell (Girth)

**STEVE ADAMYK BAND:****High Above: 7"**

I will be the first to admit that I spend a lot of time pontificating about the music of Canada, my homeland. While many of my friends south of the border will often yuk it up about Bieber, Nickelback, or Celine Dion, I will often retort with a laundry list of killer Canuck outfits that continually blow my mind. Last year I added Steve Adamyk Band to that list. Seriously catchy, well written tunes seem to be the hallmark of SAB, and this three

song slab goes a long way to perpetuate the legend. Added bonus: A cover of my favorite Canadian pop punk band of all time (Bum's "A Promise Is a Problem"). You need this record. Trust me, I'm Canadian. —Ty Stranglehold (La Ti Da, latidarecords.com)

**STRANGE MATTER:****Ennui Activation Dissolver: 7"**

This record is weird. It is Midwestern-sounding noisy hardcore one minute, then it suddenly takes a turn towards the '80s with a thrash-influenced, riffy song. It continues to straddle this line throughout the seven songs on this record. It's one of those records that is hard to talk about because while it may remind you of a bunch of different bands, the record doesn't necessarily sound like any of those bands. Whatever this is, it's cool. —Mark Twistworthy (Dirty Hippy Barn)

**SUPPRESSION / NO COMPLY:****Split: 10" EP**

The ever long-running Suppression continues to mutate and warp music with every new record. This one is less grindy than you might remember them being, and more bent math rock weirdness. Something like Fat Day crossed with what Mike Watt is doing these days. No Comply, who are back from the dead (did they ever really go away?), will sonically place you back in 1997, the peak and decline of powerviolence. They are noisier than I remember, but still raw and to the point. Spazz is a definite influence



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in the lyrics and sound, mixed with some noise excursions here and there. I prefer these guys over the cutesy "powerviolence" bands that sell pencils and gloss. —M.Avg (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

#### SUSPICIOUS BEASTS: *Used to Be Beautiful*: LP

Remember ten or so years ago when Snuffy Smiles was churning out bands that were digesting the current trends of U.S. punk and spitting them back out with added Japanese flair, many times even surpassing the original sounds? Suspicious Beasts carries on this tradition sans the Snuffy Smiles label, instead opting for a German label release. I don't see any band ever surpassing Reigning Sound doing what they do, but throw some *Too Much Guitar* and Teengenerate together, add a dash of rock'n'roll swagger, and you've got a record destined to find its way on to the repeat stack. —Matt Seward (Alien Snatch!, aliensnatch.de)

#### SWIFTUMZ: "Willy" b/w "Can We Get Together?": 7"

Figured this was gonna be some art damaged shit, but you know how it goes, books and covers and all that. What we have is a solo project by SF local Chris McVicker, although I think it could be a functioning band now. Tremendous power pop like the bastard sons of the Real Kids or local faves Cocktails, straddling the line perfectly between sugary pop and tough punk.

The production is top notch and the guitars shimmer like some of the U.K.'s C86 bands or even the Wedding Present. More fool me for not hearing them before; definitely won't miss other releases. —Tim Brooks (Divis And Mason, divisandmason.com)

#### TAXPAYERS, THE: *Cold Hearted Town*: LP

The Taxpayers are an American band. The America you find in the lure of the bayou. Kudzu-covered mansions. The devil at the crossroads. Headless horsemen. Roadside carnivals. *The Air-conditioned Nightmare*. The America that's mysterious, unrestrained, and cruel. *Cold Hearted Town* sounds like Tom Waits on sketchy drugs. A baritone saxophone makes it a record as heavy as a steam engine: pummeling, oppressive, and right on time. Tenor sax, trumpet, banjo, and accordion whirl around the precision rhythms like fireflies, flickering in and out. Haunting, luminous, organic. It's jazz played in punk's backyard. It's like drinking an expensive amaretto out of a dirty peanut butter jar. The guitars alternate from acoustic tones dryer than scotch and meandering slide riffage that sounds like someone playing an AM radio dial through a distortion pedal. Rob's vocal delivery oscillates between the fervor of a street corner preacher and the avowments of somebody who thinks no one is listening. With fire and abandon. Think the Reverend Gary Davis with espresso in his veins instead of blood. The back

of the record tells a story about how Rob bought a book of incantations in New Orleans and went to write the album in an abandoned house. I won't give the story away, but I will tell you that he spills his blood. The lyrics reflect the story. Satan speaks in the song "Plant Oak," telling the narrator, "You know the answer, you know what to do: Link hands, lie down, and tie rope. By the full moon and black skies, plant oak." Highly, highly fucking recommended. —Matthew Hart (Useless State, useless-state.com / Plan-It X, plan-it-x.com)

#### TEENGENERATE: *Get More Action*: LP/*Five Covers*: EP

The long lost original recordings of the classic (and I never use that descriptor) garage punk LP *Get Action*. Plus some modern day additions and tweaking, but I'll come back to that later, or not. What's the difference between *Get Action* and the *Get More...* album? Some songs, for one (apparently "1979" was written in the two to three weeks between recording sessions.) *Get More...* is less trebly and has a little more low-end presence. The vocals are a little less blown out, so you can really hear Fink's Saints-like delivery. Also, the playing is a hair or two slower on *Get More...* *Five Covers* comes from the same recording sessions. I'll still never understand how Teengenerate figured out the words to The Pagans' "Six and Change." I've listened to The Pagans' version like a million times and I can't figure it out. That song

and The Queers' "Kicked out of the Webelos" are absent from *Get More...* Also absent is a certain opening line from a certain above-mentioned cover. Don't know if that's how the *Five Covers* version was recorded or if it was deleted for posterity. —Sal Lucci (Crypt)

#### TERVEET KADET: *Piinaavanautinto*: 7" EP

Hard to wrap the ol' noggin around the fact that these cats are well into their fourth decade of existence, but facts is facts. Not that you could guess that from what's on this disc. Nooooohoho, every thrashy groove of this bleeds, lashes, and slashes with the best of anything they put out thirty years ago, while also teaching ye that sometimes a barrage of rabbit punches is more potent than a prolonged pummeling. Nice to hear new fjordcore from one of its finest purveyors on the planet. —Jimmy Alvarado (SPHC, sphc.bigcartel.com)

#### TIM TIMEBOMB: "She's Drunk All the Time" b/w "Tulare": 7"

The mumbly guy from the Transplants sings over a guitar, mandolin, accordion, banjo, and a dobro (whatever the fuck that is) on two songs. Unless dude has put out more mickey mouse bluegrass, this one's a clear departure from his previous efforts in all ways but quality. You've probably gathered that this record is pretty bad. Or maybe not, as you people keep buying this fella's records despite the fact that the



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descriptions alone of the last few things this guy has done should have brought death to even his vanity label releases. It's a small wonder. —Vincent (Hellcat / Pirates Press, no address listed)

#### TRANSFIX: Self-titled: LP

Death rock out of Olympia, which seems to have a lot of good bands lately (I say this because the last time I remember bands coming out of Olympia, it was of the K Records variety, and that was a pretty patchy quality run of bands). Transfix consist of members from Gag, Family Stoned, and Love Interest. Anyway, back to the record that is spinning on my turntable to the right of me. Transfix play the dark and sometimes ethereal stuff that runs from very English-sounding stuff, like the opener "Bad Trip," and on to the semi raw and tweaked oddness of "New Fix," "Living," and "Youth in Decline" (which has a rehearsal tape quality about it). "Fix Tomorrow" is one of my favorites on here. There's a decidedly dreary tone musically and lyrically, and the guitar reminds me of the Cure between their first album and *The Top*. I like the ending to "Slip Away" that sounds like it's a totally different song and out of left field. Makes for a somber ending to the first side. I'm definitely a fan of the current interest in the death rock / goth sound from new bands, and this is a record I know I will still listen to years down the road. —M.Avrq (Dutch Tilt, dutchtilt.net)

#### TRY HARDZ: Midget Made Giant: CD

Sprawling, unfocused jam band hip-hop that feels like it could only come from a liberal arts college in a medium-sized town. A friend of mine recently trademarked the phrase The Right Kind of Weird. Try Hardz would be The Wrong Kind of Weird. Or, I don't know, it's like they've created a subgenre that's literally just hyphens. They put every type of music together—folk, funk, rap, jazz, outré electronics, you name it. I could say it's in the same vein as cLOUDDEAD/Why?/Anticon stuff, but that's being very generous. The ambition's there, the experimental sensibilities are there, the weed is there. But the songs are often incoherent, the production is demo-quality, and the rhymes are objectively terrible. I kept thinking of a Mark Ronson/Kanye West interview I read years ago where one of them said something to the effect of, "When they say there's 'something for everyone,' it means there's nothing for anyone." —Matt Werts (Fauxtown, fauxtownrecords.com)

#### TWO MAN ADVANTAGE / BLACKOUT SHOPPERS: Split: 7"

Two Man Advantage has been around for over fifteen years, wear hockey masks at shows, got written up in the *Wall Street Journal* in an article about "puck rock," were ceased and desisted by the Zamboni company, and as of October's split with Blackout Shoppers, they've "got the puck [and] don't give a fuck." For the uninitiated, Two Man Advantage play NY punk

hardcore with occasional butt-rock guitar solos and '80s glam-metal guitar harmonies. For me, I seek more adequate descriptors for this group and I fail to find them. I see Two Man Advantage like I see that really weird model train set bar at the end of my street; it's too fucking weird to drink at every weekend, but that doesn't stop me from staring at it with wonder. If you liked Two Man Advantage before, it's only getting weirder and stronger. If you've never heard of them, it's like Crystal Pepsi—not quite right, but you're rooting for it. On the B-side, Blackout Shoppers bring a bit of Negative Approach and a bit of the standard beer dripping bar punk. This 7" comes in a milky blue vinyl, keeping it strange. —Jim Joyce (Sexy Baby, sexybabyrecords.com)

#### UH-OH'S IN PARADISE / SLY EUGENE: Demo: Split: CD-R

So is Uh-Oh's In Paradise the project of Uh-Oh in the way Slash's Snakepit is pretty much Slash's deal or is it just a misspelling? If so, I would suggest Uh-Oh ditch the bongo player, 'cause that shit is annoying and he doesn't really need the awful keyboards or whatever it is making that shrill "EEEE" sound either. This lonely Midwestern punk singer-songwriter should do himself a favor and just strum his guitar while singing his songs and cut out all the extra shit. The songs ain't bad. They're often self-deprecating and funny. For instance, when I saw there was a song called "Blue Balls" I thought, *that*

*damn well better be about blue balls and not just some clever title trickery.* Well, it wasn't exactly the direct noun but I was satisfied with its placement in a song about being brokenhearted and not scoring. Sly Eugene has a much stronger voice, a better recording, and less of the horrible keyboard and bongos (unfortunately, they both come in on track eleven, "Care Free"). His second song is Billy Bragg's "To Have and to Have Not." It's strummed acoustically like a traditional folk song, which is cool to hear after years of appreciating Bragg's version with its plugged-in and reverbed-out electric guitar. Otherwise, like Uh-Oh's In Paradise, you get a sampling of songs from a talented young songwriter. Sly plays a mean harmonica, to boot. I'm not saying that this is great—the bongos severely hamper all listenability—but if a demo is supposed to show potential, it's certainly here. I hope they stick with it and I hope they get out of LaFontaine, Indiana, too. —Craven Rock (Joe Savarino)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS: Cooler Than Ice, Arctic Records and the Rise of Philly Soul: 6 x CD, 6 x 7"

I'm consistently amazed at the amount of really good '60s and '70s soul music that has resurfaced in recent years. If you've been fortunate enough to get a hold of any of the Eccentric Soul comps from the Numero Group then, hopefully, you'll know what I'm talking about. If you

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haven't been so fortunate, then bear with me. Like so many of the best movements in art and music, most soul music was organic and, thus, many artists, labels, and producers tended to their own insular styles that were tied to the geography; "scenes" if you will. Berry Gordy and The Funk Brothers developed the "Motown Sound" to astounding commercial success. The music that came out of Stax Records in Memphis owed much of its identity to the unique working studio arrangement and house band, Booker T and The M.G.'s. Across town at Hi Records, Willie Mitchell developed a unique and unmistakable production style that would be the hallmark of Al Green and O.V. Wright's recordings. This brings us to the story of Jimmy Bishop and Arctic Records. Arctic Records was one of the earliest and most important soul labels in the City of Brotherly Love. Founded by Bishop, a DJ for WDAS in Philadelphia, Arctic released over fifty singles between 1964 and 1971 and this box set contains all of them. Only a handful of these songs met with any commercial success; "Yes, I'm Ready" by Barbara Mason probably being the most successful (and recognizable) song in the collection. The name Della Humphrey may also be familiar to some soul music aficionados and an early single by Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, who would go on to great success in the seventies, is also included in this collection. But

while hardly any of the names listed in this box set are recognizable to anyone except perhaps the most formidable of music nerds, some of these artists would later become noteworthy fixtures of popular music in the seventies, e.g. Kenny Gamble (who would become part of the famed songwriting and producing team of Gamble and Huff), The Volcanos (whose members would go on to play in The Trammps) and The Temptones (featuring a young singer named Daryl Hohl who would go on to considerable fame after changing the spelling of his last name to "Hall" and teaming up with a guitar player named John Oates). Despite all of these interesting tidbits, what really stands out in this collection is the music: six CDs and six 7" records full of great songwriting, heartfelt vocal performances, rock solid rhythm sections, well-placed horn and string arrangements, and gospel style call and response backups. This is late sixties soul at its finest. I find it hard to believe that some of these songs didn't meet with more commercial success at the time. Singles featured by Kenny Hamber, Winfield Parker, Billy Floyd, and other artists I've already mentioned are easily as good as anything that was around at that time. Tragically, Arctic did not make much of a long-lasting impact outside of Philly and closed up shop. As a result, most of the music on this collection has been out-of-print for decades. The

packaging for this release is extensive and includes almost fifty pages of liner notes with details on each of the recordings and the associated artists. It would've been nice if this collection was modular, rather than bound in the book-like format in which it was produced, but that's just nitpicking isn't it? While this collection is highly recommended for the ardent soul music fan, it may be a bit much for the casual listener. It would be nice if Jamie/Guyden were to consider another release that distills down the most noteworthy tracks to a single CD/LP compilation. A move like that may go a long way towards spreading the word on some great music that has been far too obscure for far too long. —Russ Van Cleave (Jamie/Guyden, jamguy@gmail.com, jamguy.com)

#### VARIX: *I Can't Get Out: 7"*

Right off the bat, there are six songs on this 7". That usually means I'm in for something really fast, and I was. Fast, fuzzed-out (a bit crusty perhaps?) hardcore punk rock. Unrelenting in both musical and vocal delivery. Really impressive. Here is the part I feel strange about. If the vocals had been delivered by a guy with one of the two seemingly requisite hardcore vocal styles these days (a. Deep, gruff angry Muppet or b. High pitched, vocal cord-shearing screech) I probably would have disliked it. Instead, Varix is comprised of women, and the vocals

are fast, a tad screeched, and fully urgent. It works for me. Is it some kind of double standard? Maybe, but I like what I like. This is a great record. I've also got to mention the amazing DIY packaging. Beautiful hand screened cover and lyric sheet. Nice work everyone! —Ty Stranglehold (Fashionable Idiots, fashionableidiots.blogspot.ca)

#### VICIOUS CIRCLE:

##### Self-titled: 12" EP + DVD

The legends and horror stories about this notorious L.A. proto-hardcore band still reverberate through the county's underground, yet precious few of those tales are in direct reference to their music itself. The simple answer is that previous to this release, they had nothing tangible the great unwashed could get their grimy paws on. What's been finally unearthed—essentially two garage rehearsal recordings—showcases a band worth the discussion three-plus decades later. It's no doubt rough listening for modern ears attuned to even demos ProTooled into oblivion, but it's nonetheless surprisingly clear considering the source, with the vocals being the only thing really getting lost now and again in the mix. The songs themselves (including a cover of Eater's "Get Raped" and a version of "Cover Girls," a version of which was recorded and later released on Posh Boy by guitarist Steve Houston's next band, The Klan) are for the most part straightforward




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late-'70s suburban L.A. punk, yet if one listens close, echoes of ideas and rhythmic explorations that would later be explored by TSOL bubble just under the hail of barre chords. Vocalist/lead agitator Jack Grisham offers some historical context in a DVD interview included with the vinyl. In all, a nice addition to the underground's historical record. —Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

**VIDEO: "(Join The) Hate Wave"**  
b/w "Captivity": 7"

TV's Daniel can do no wrong in my opinion. He plays in some of my favorite bands (Mind Spiders, Bad Sports, and High Tension Wires) and now unleashes this upon me. Video is somehow engaging yet off-putting at the same time. Mean with a smile on its face. Although they don't sound like them all that much, I keep thinking about The Spits or The Girls or even The Stitches when I hear this. I hear there is an LP out there that I'm going to have to hunt down. This is damn good! —Ty Stranglehold (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

**VIDEO: "(Join The) Hate Wave"**  
b/w "Captivity": 7"

I am sadly late to the Hate Wave and should pay for my mistake. Woe unto me for sleeping on this band! What the fuck is it about Denton, Texas that so many good bands burst forth, seemingly fully formed, from there? And what the fuck is it about Total Punk? They really should use the

slogan "Home of the Hits" because, yeah. "(Join The) Hate Wave" is throbbing, stabbing punk with a flange/phaser effect that kind of makes me feel drunk. Like that fine line between gloriously shitfaced and room-spinning nausea. I don't know how else to say it. "Captivity" is hypnotic and driving. Also, my girlfriend likes this song, and she really does *not* like most of what I listen to. —Sal Lucci (Total Punk)

**WHITE FLAG / SHOPLIFTERS:**  
Split: 7" EP

White Flag: I'm not gonna wax poetic about the recent death White Flag's guitarist Bill Bartel (aka "Pat Fear"). Suffice to say some thought he was the bee's knees, some would've loved to see his head mounted on a pike at various points during the last four decades. Though we shared common acquaintances and at one point even wrote for the same publication, I can't say (at least with any certainty—again, suffice to say, a beer-saturated memory is highly unreliable) I never met the vato, so I can't weigh in on either side of that conversation. I can, however, say, I did dig his band in its various permutations—piss-take pseudo-hardcore, pop, rock, and beyond—and the three tracks here serve as a fitting swan song, if it is, indeed, such. Two are loud punk/pop stompers with hook up the hoo-haw, and a third that

sounds like it would also fit that description if it weren't backwards. Shoplifters: Their poppy rock thang ain't quite my bag o' worms, but I can appreciate the work they put into crafting the two tunes they contribute here, with "Carnivore Heart" being the more peppier, and more memorable of the two. Don't envy 'em sharing this split, but they do their best to hold their own. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.bigcartel.com)

**WORRIED MOTHERS: Tape: Cassette**

There's taking yourself seriously, and there's Taking Yourself Seriously. With more theatrical music, often the intention, and subsequent elevation to caps status, can become a stumbling block: if an audience spends too much time wondering about intention then the music can be obscured by the art of the thing (or, perhaps, The Art Of The Thing), you dig? Worried Mothers manage to deliver a well-played, highly performative set of diverse-yet-cohesive songs without tripping over themselves. The singer's vocals are high-pitched and flamboyant, like that nineties band Placebo. This was certainly recorded on a budget, with all the requisite rawness, and hits in a well-organized blast in which everything is audible but it all kinda blurs around the edges for max effect. I dig the occasional keys, which punch through the mix. There's occasional flat-out

aggression, which provides a nice counterpoint to the more subdued numbers, some of which contain little melodic hooks which remind me of Guided By Voices. —Michael T. Fournier (Doom Town)

**YOUNG LEAVES: Alive and Well: LP**

There are so many wonderfully incongruent facets to this record. The music itself, when I think about it, doesn't make sense. It's catchy, melancholic punk, but there are these fucked up, fuzzed-out guitar parts that are totally grating in an almost Melvins-y kind of way, but really catchy riffs will bubble out of the fuzzmuck and it's weird but somehow so right. Then there's the album art, which doesn't make sense for this music, but is such a perfect example of how to make a record so much more than the music. It's essentially a wordless, six-panel, manga-inspired comic strip about a man whose fiancé turns into a mutant. It begins on the back side of the lyric sheet, continues on the front cover of the LP and then concludes, crushingly, on the back cover. Records like this are reminders of why downloading music is dumb. —MP Johnson (Baldy Longhair)

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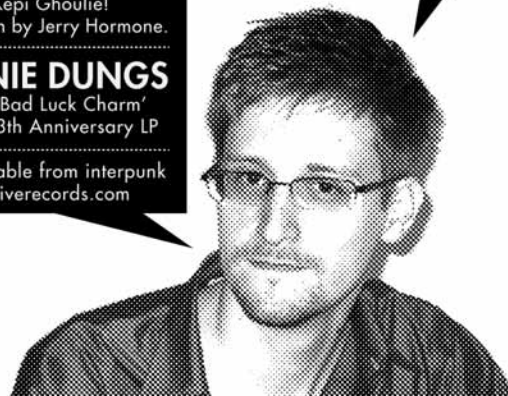
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Razorcake Records #23. Split release with Recess Records. Distributed by No Idea.  
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brave reading."**

—Craven Rock  
PILTDOWNLAD #6

**CABILDO QUARTERLY #5**,  
\$1, 11" x 17", copied, 2 pgs.

This two-sided, large format literary publication features fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. I reviewed the last two issues, too, and things seem to generally be the same. The writing is good and I believe the authors got across their ideas, but none of the pieces jumped out and overtook me with any particular emotional response. One thing I'd like to see with *Cabildo Quarterly* is a different size, but barring that, it would be helpful to see it with a smaller size font, thereby allowing them to fit in a few more pieces. This has a lot of potential, but it's not quite there yet. —Kurt Morris (CQHQ, PO Box 784, Belchertown, MA 01007)

**DORIS #30**, \$3.75,  
8 1/2" x 7", copied, 32 pgs.

*Doris* is the zine that made me realize what a zine could do, how, beyond entertainment, zines could be education. I am always so amazed by the intellect, compassion, and wisdom with which Cindy Crabb examines herself (past and present) and her community; and her ferocity to heal and better both. In this issue of *Doris*, Cindy offers up some book reviews (Mend My Dress Press gets a "best ever" award for putting out so many great zine anthologies), a cool story about not getting stung by bees, an interview with Support New York (a DIY collective that aims to heal the effects of sexual assault and abuse; works in punk and anarchist communities). She also openly talks in several pieces about parts of her process of healing post-sexual assault, and about accountability within that context. Make no mistake: this is not a zine about sexual abuse or surviving it: it's about a person who's been through a lot, who's doing really well by anyone's standards; it's about the community that person lives in, the flaws and

benefits of making your life outside of the mainstream. I think anyone could read this zine—any zine in the *Doris* series—and love it, and I always recommend that everyone should. —Bianca Barragan (Doris Press, PO Box 29, Athens, OH 45701, dorisdoris.com)

**EXPLODING BUFFALO: THE**

**RELIGION ISSUE**, Free,  
8 1/2" x 11", copied, 66 pgs.  
For the whopping price tag of free, *Exploding Buffalo* provides tons of varied content—poetry, articles, illustrations, photography, short fiction, a one-act play—from several contributors. The issue explores differing viewpoints about the nature and purpose of religion. First off, the layouts are clean, but a tad sanitary. I prefer a balance between computer processing and cut-and-paste layouts. Because of the computer layouts, there's a lot of white space, but given the impressive sixty-six pages, my grievance is a moot point. Ultimately, the wide swath of material, which I imagine required some serious people wrangling, compensates for any shortcomings. Some memorable portions are Patty Delgado's article answering the question "What is religion?" and a macabre short story about a man assembling a Frankenstein monster as a vessel for the second coming of Jesus. Given what I've recently read about the International House of Prayers (or IHOP) in regards to the followers believing that they're prayer warriors for Christ, the idea of a Frankenchrist isn't so farfetched. (Note: *Frankenchrist* is my favorite Dead Kennedys' album.) Overall an interesting zine with a lot to sift through. Fun Fact: The name Dr. Acula, which is used in the closing play, was the pen name of Forrest J Ackerman, editor and head writer of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. —Sean Arenas (explodingbuffalo@gmail.com)

**GENEVA13 #20**, \$2,  
8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 59 pgs.

*Geneva13* is explained as "a love story to this town of ours," but another way to put it would be to say that it's a fanzine to the college town of Geneva, population about 13,000, on the Finger Lakes in New York State. (In the course of the zine, it becomes clear that the town is small, but not so small that everyone knows each other.) Through a series of in-depth conversational interviews with townspeople, you learn history of the town from many perspectives: one postal employee interviews another about the pros and cons (ninety-nine percent pros) of working at the burg's post office; the guy who's run the upholstery shop for almost thirty years gives back story of the building his shop is in (and how he came to own it) as well as his own life going all the way back to his youth in Puerto Rico. Is any of this interesting? Hell yes! As sappy as it sounds, every person has their own story and to follow it as it slowly unravels is fascinating. I can't imagine how amazing it would be to live in this town and read *Geneva13*, to finally know what's up with the people you see in town every day, to have a million conversation starters so you can actually talk to them. What an amazing community-building tool! I am now a fan of Geneva. —Bianca Barragan (Geneva13 Press, PO Box 13, Geneva NY 14456, mail@geneva13.com)

**GREATEST CITY IN THE  
WORLD FANZINE #5**, \$5ppd.,  
audio cassette, 92 mins.

The basics: Interviews and live recordings (and possibly demos?) of four bands that played Chaos in Tejas in 2012. Bands include Wiccans, Creamers, Cülo, and Pierced Arrows, though I think Tear It Up's live set might also be included—I can't make out a fucking thing on this tape insert.

The recordings are all of good quality except for the Pierced Arrows set, which is pretty clearly a room recording with a lot of audience noise. The first three bands almost uniformly match the interviewer's inane questions ("Do you prefer Bud Light Lime or Bud Light Limerita?" and "Do you guys have a favorite Sublime song?") with oodles of sarcasm, mumbling and, to me, what amounted to a nearly crushing self-consciousness and cynicism. The Pierced Arrows interview was, in contrast, both interesting and earnest: listening to Fred and Toody Cole gently tease each other, document their songwriting and record-making processes, their favorite book (*Atlas Shrugged!*), or talk about the beavers that live on their property, was great. So, a mixed bag here: I can't imagine people wanting to listen to recordings of band interviews very often, but the music included is almost across-the-board great. —Keith Rosson (Deed Runlea, 538 Johnson Ave. #203, Brooklyn, NY 11237)

**KING-CAT COMICS #74**, \$5 ppd.,  
5 1/2" x 8 1/2" copied, 30pgs.

Being decrepit isn't always going to feel bad, not when it comes to John Porcellino and the dingy city of South Beloit where he once called home. Things were grim, depressing, and he was "living in the most depressing building," "in the most depressing town," and "bitter about...life in general." Actually, there isn't anything bitter about this zine. It takes a few darker turns but it goes back and forth nicely between his comics, journal entries, and one-sided convo letters sent in from readers. My favorite excerpt is one I can relate to with equal amounts of embarrassment. I so happened to stop shaving in the same month I decided to stop using deodorant and I had to learn to ignore the fact that I, too, "smell like teen skunk" all the time. And from time to



time I'll notice that "smell[ing] like springtime and roses," I still don't have deodorant within arms reach. Instead I turn to one of the greatest inventions modern civilization had ever provided me with: baby wipes. It's the closest thing I'll ever get to feeling like springtime, all the time. Reading *King-Cat* puts me in a good mood. The stories have their highs and lows that aren't necessarily a rollercoaster ride of emotion, but I found pockets of powerful sentiment in every story. —Simon Sotelo (John Porcellino, PO Box 142, So. Beloit, IL 61080)

to the plate for this varsity sexter. Cool read. —Camille Reynolds (catherinettezine@gmail.com)

#### PILTDOWNLAD #6:

**INSTITUTIONALIZED**, donations/trades/stamps, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied and bound, 100 pgs. Kelly gives lengthy context to what brought him to write *Institutionalized* in his letters section where he gets real with some of his readers and pen pals. I'll give you the gist of it: After a serious mental breakdown where he rid himself of all his possessions and left his wife and home in a

sent to a home for... I guess I'll call at-risk youth, institutionalized. And the story continues from there. I assure you, it's well worth your time. Kelly wraps up the zine with some write-ups on zines he likes and why many of them stand as personal pieces in their own right. A brave zine you should brave reading. —Craven Rock (Kelly Dessaint, PO Box 86714, LA, CA 90086, piltdownlad@gmail.com)

#### SNAKE PIT: TATTOO STORIES,

\$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 32 pgs. As you can guess from the title,

few people complain that Ben's daily comics are too simplistic, that there is not enough of a storyline. Such people are fools. Ben's daily comics are packed with stories, but told in a deceptively simple way. Same thing with these tattoo stories. Some of the stories are just a few sentences long, some are a couple pages. They each tell the story about the specific tattoo, but together they tell a much larger, more complicated story about Ben, the people around him, and worlds that we all inhabit. I won't bury you with examples, except for this one: in less than ten lines, Ben explains

**"When I first got my hands on this zine I hoped that the title was referencing depressing stories of mediocre failure and burnouts, and it delivers!"**

—Simon Sotelo | *LET DOWN #1*

**LET DOWN #1**, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 16pgs.

Do you like pop punk? I love pop punk! Pop punk is one of my favorite musical genres to ever exist. All cynicism aside, give me a catchy hook, angry bass, and a singer that "doesn't sound like a barking dog" and you've got a fan for life. I truly do love pop punk. *Let Down* is a review zine based out of Chicago and is a great resource for those interested in pop punk, listing a ton of distros, bands, and reviews. Don't worry, when I first got my hands on this zine I hoped that the title was referencing depressing stories of mediocre failure and burnouts, and it delivers! At first glance, these stories are just plain downers but they get funnier and funnier as time passes. There are several different contributors offering their nuggets of wisdom in light-hearted lists. Looking forward to the second issue. —Simon Sotelo (blakekarlson27@gmail.com)

**LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXTING**, copied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 10 pgs.

Get ready to be schooled in sexting. Intelligent and saucy, *Let's Talk About Sexting* is a smart little read that appeals to anyone who likes sex, but may or may not have a clue on the proper etiquette and rhetoric that will... um... get the job done. It's also an "ode to" from a hetero-female perspective to the past men in her life who were, let's say, inadequate. Ouch. Nice little booklet illustrated by Frieda Masters, who apparently is also a talented tattoo artist. Gotta step up

cross-country fugue to New Orleans that ended in near oblivion, he decided to "quit running." He got help and decided to tell his real story. Whereas before he could only write of drunken adventures and hedonism (the devaluing tone is me paraphrasing him. I recommend *Piltdownlad* #5, which is full of such tales), he gets down to the serious trauma that led to his life of struggling with PTSD and mental illness. After writing an 850-page autobiographical novel that he felt was "an utter failure," he started all over again, breaking his story up into different issues of this zine. He breaks from typical zine form in the way that it's still written as fiction, written in four different voices, but he assures us that the story is very true, going as far as to print court documents and newspaper articles. The story starts out with Louis, a sixteen-year-old and his preteen younger brother, Joey, trashing their soon-to-be former home where they lived with their sexually-abusive father and his scumbag accomplice. The narrative of this destruction calls to mind a John Darnielle revenge fantasy song, except in *Piltdownlad* there's proof, a gleeful Polaroid of them "so there was no mistaking who was behind the wreckage." They end this retribution by scrawling "FEEL THE WRATH OF THE INNOCENTS!" on the wall and turning in their father and his slimeball friend to the social workers who'd been prying them, suspecting something was wrong. It's quite a chapter, but this issue has more to do with what happens next. They're

this is a collection of stories about Ben Snakepit's tattoos. And there it is, a photo of his naked body right there on the cover, flashing some ink as a preview of what is inside. But his naked junk is covered up by a big black box with white text that reads WARNING: CONTAINS NO COMICS. No doubt Ben felt he had to give fair warning to people who might buy the zine thinking they were getting a collection of his comics. He was probably worried they'd be disappointed. In fact, in his introduction, Ben says that if you don't like this zine, just bring it over to his house and he'll give you your money back. But I'm pretty sure you won't want your money back. Inside there are photos of forty-five of Ben's tattoos, with stories that accompany them. The tattoos range from pretty horrible stick-n-poke jobs to elaborate pieces of art. Some of the tattoos are band logos (Hickey, F.Y.P., Dead Milkmen), some are questionable puns (Gallagher Playing Galaga), some are drunken mistakes ("Ke Pit"), and of course one Razorcake. Admittedly, the quality of some of the photos isn't that great, but this is a zine, not a coffee table art book. And, really, the photos are of secondary importance. The stories are what make this collection such a treasure. Maybe I'm the only one who reads and re-reads the introductions to Ben's *Snakepit* collections as much as the comics themselves. I really like the way he writes. He has a certain "voice" that I find totally real and engaging. I've never met the guy, but I'm pretty sure he talks just like he writes. At least I hope so. I've heard a

the story behind the pill bottle tattoo he got in honor of the girlfriend who would become his first wife. Those ten sentences make up one of the greatest short stories I've ever read. No shit. Grab a copy of this while you can. I don't think there are going to be too many people swinging by Ben's house to return their copies. —Kevin Dunn (Ben Snakepit, PO Box 49447, ATX 78765)

#### THINGS AND SUCH, copied,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 10 pgs.

This primitive and cute little zine written by Marie Sudduth left me scratching my head, which at least got me thinking. My interpretation on the story is that it's a snarky account of scenesters who think they are doing important things like showing up to shows and such, but are really just a bunch of sellouts at heart. It could also just be a stoney nonsensical story about a cute, happy kitty. You pick. Or better yet, get something else out of it. —Camille Reynolds (No address listed)

#### TNS RECORDS FREE FANZINE

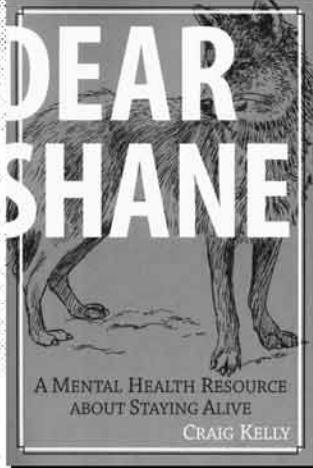
#15, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" copied, 47 pgs.

TNS's tenth anniversary issue of their free fanzine is an excellent introduction to the storied underground U.K. punk and ska label, even if you're like me and are embarrassed that you haven't heard of a single band mentioned. Born out of discontent with money-grubbing promoters, TNS (short for *That's Not Skanking*) uses the occasion to critically examine how milestones are typically marked in music. Insightful, scathing features take on

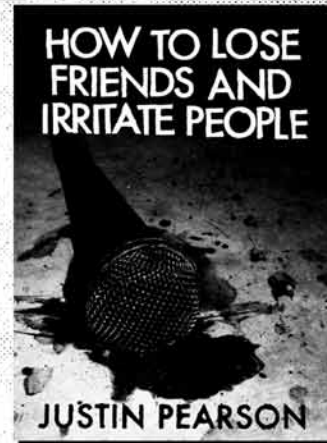
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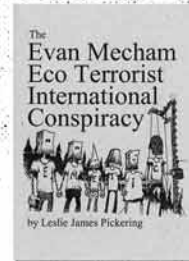
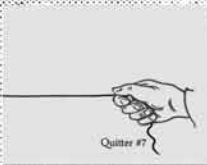
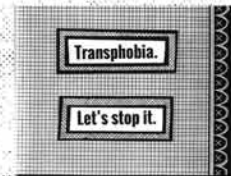


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Best Of lists, bands reuniting to play albums in full for jacked-up ticket prices, and the phenomenon of "track eights," which is when a band drops an unusually exciting

started booking shows in their small towns. Ignore the few indulgent head-scratcher poetry breaks and an obvious label crush on Fat Wreck in the reviews, but this zine

of disenfranchised, unmotivated, and malcontent students is often cringe-inducing. But like any dose of reality, it's entirely necessary and purposeful. The teacher, Ms.

racial slurs her way ("Snowflake," "Snowy") or often never show up to class. Ms. Wilde is determined, but the addition of true accounts serve as a reminder of the uphill

**"It's an 'ode to' from a hetero-female perspective to the past men in her life who were, let's say, inadequate. Ouch."**

—Camylle Reynolds | *LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXTING*

song in the middle of a record to open side B with a bang after it is flipped over. The zine also functions as a catalog, so you'll stumble on a new release or reviewed record of interest. I scribbled down The Franceens and Sounds Of Swami. The zine's highest point is the "Ten Years of TNS" feature, which looks back at their adorably alcohol-soaked early days as a show series and unwavering dedication to DIY. Early TNS performers and attendees discuss what the label's ethos has inspired them to make. Many formed successful bands, others created their own zines or

is a thoughtful reminder that we Americans need to pay attention to what's going on across the pond more often. —Claire Palermo (TNS, 17 Heywood Rd., Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1FB, UK)

**YO, MISS #1: A GRAPHIC LOOK AT HIGH SCHOOL**, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 35 pgs. For anyone who has ever had demanding experiences working in education, *Yo, Miss* might trigger violent flashbacks. Wilde's honest depiction of Wildcat Academy, a second chance high school, and its cast

Wilde, struggles to find a way to connect with her students. She goes home with nightmares and finds herself straddling the fence between optimism and nervous breakdown. Yet, she is acutely aware of the challenges many of her students face (economic, familial, social barriers). This is the first part in a five part series, so the set up is painfully frank. I expect (or at least hope) that the rebellious cast of characters will eventually make a triumphant turn around, but for this first issue, Ms. Wilde serves as a willing punching bag. Her students sling

battle educators confront day in, day out, and the unfathomable obstacles these students encounter on a daily basis. Oh, the humanity. Get it and get educated. —Sean Arenas (Microcosm, 636 SE 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97214, microcosmpublishing.com)



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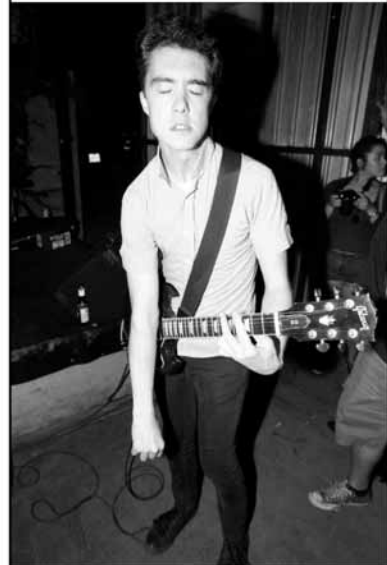


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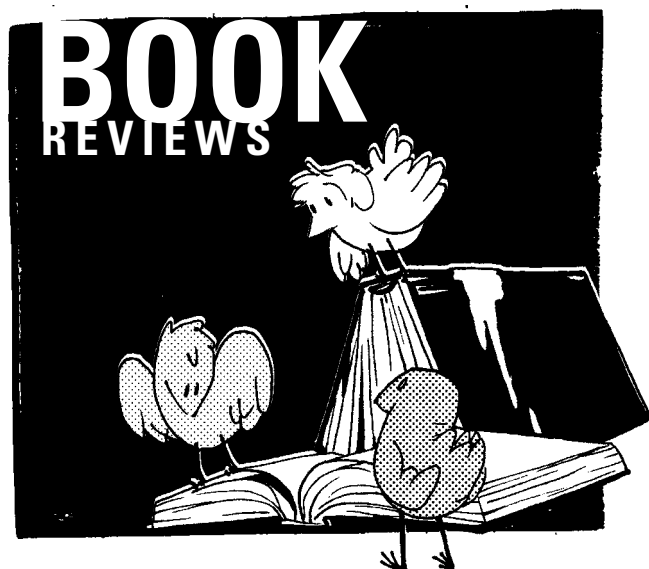
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### Heavy Hangs the Head

By Taryn Hipp, 139 pgs.

Taryn Hipp's *Heavy Hangs the Head* is an intriguing read written by a woman in her mid-thirties who is looking back at her life of alcoholism, feminism, and bad relationships. The small physical dimensions of the book makes it more like a long essay written in memoir style as opposed to a gigantic tome, but that also means that one can read this rather quickly. Hipp is the author of many zines,

It's often the downfall of many perzines and it's a fine line to walk. How much does the author delve into their personal experiences and how much can she or he look outside themselves and paint a compelling, all-encompassing narrative with their prose? While there was some self-analysis, I was often left asking, "Why? Where were these issues and problems coming from?" Perhaps it's the Freudian in me, but a fuller look at her childhood might've allowed for a better understanding of who Hipp became.

There were often times I desired to know more about other people in her life: what did they look like, how did they act, what were their experiences? Providing these details would certainly have made for a longer read, but it would have also strengthened the tale. There are certain occasions where the author recounts specific experiences, but some more examples of this would've been great.

Still, the overall story is compelling and ultimately encouraging. Hipp acknowledges her life isn't perfect, but towards the end of the book one can see her growth and how far she has come compared to where she once was. It made me happy to see her overcome the obstacles that once held her down. It's always good to see someone come out the other side of their trials and tribulations as a stronger, more content person and seeing that in this book is what made me enjoy it so much. —Kurt Morris (Sweet Candy Press, PO Box 13201, Olympia, WA 98508)

### Nights and Days in a Dark Carnival: Time Spent with Juggalos

By Craven Rock, 152 pgs.

This book is a fantastic outsider perspective of the ever-elusive subculture of Juggalos. Craven saddles himself alongside the 'los and 'lettes at their annual Family reunion, The Gathering of Juggalos. Much like Hunter S. Thompson and the Hell's Angels, Craven immerses himself in the crowd to get the truest story he can in a matter of a few days. Filtered through a Southern and punk rock upbringing, he retells first-hand accounts of being a misfit among misfits. Major subjects such as class, religion, LGBTQ positions and gender roles, race,

**"It's always good to see someone come out the other side of their trials and tribulations as a stronger, more content person."**

—Kurt Morris, *Heavy Hangs the Head*

including the perzine *Lady Teeth*. The style of the book is written in much the same way as many other perzines: short sections recounting events, written in first person.

Hipp starts the book with stories of her parents, geographic locations of residence, siblings, and the like. It was good to get such background, as these people influenced her life to a great deal. As the tale progresses, she speaks of depression and anxiety that began to hit her in her teens, the anger that came with her parents' divorce, her introduction to alcohol, and discovering music. It is a story with which many punk rockers and people who didn't fit in with their peers can identify.

Along the way, Hipp discovers feminism and riot grrrl music. It plays a big impact on opening her eyes to the world. However, she is conflicted with this as she delves into self-destructive behavior where she begins to sleep around with whoever will take her. And she does this a lot. (That's not my judgment—that's how she describes it.) She ends up married to a punk rocker much younger than her; one of the few people in her life she feels who cares about her, but years later ends up divorced from him. Hipp goes into this with all of its heart-breaking sadness.

I enjoyed following Hipp's life. Even though there were many aspects of her life I couldn't identify with (well, honestly, I don't have personal knowledge with most of her experiences and I'm also a guy, so I can't relate to being female and how that shaped her life), I can still appreciate a compelling story. The writing moves the book along at a good clip, and the personal viewpoint can help the reader identify with the author.

There are a few ways in which the story could've been strengthened. While I understand the perzine style—having written some of my own—there was an overly heavy reliance on "I" throughout the book.

drug and alcohol use, loyalty, and hip-hop are well explored through observations and interviews. Our narrator manages not to get beat up for being a poser. In fact, he steps behind barriers that melt away once he's journeyed into the Dark Carnival. This yields Craven an experience that pays off with a clear understanding of Insane Clown Posse followers. Complete with in-depth research, this book allows non-Juggalos a raw peak behind the curtain of America's Side Show. —Kayla Greet (Mend My Dress Press, mendmydresspress.bigcartel.com)

### Villain's Sidekick, The

By Stephen T. Brophy, 78 pgs.

Like you and me, Duke a.k.a. "Hand Cannon," has problems. He's got a resentful ex-wife, a custody battle, a shitty apartment, and a cat to feed. He's got a criminal record, debts to pay, and he's on parole for past drug-fueled misdeeds. Oh, and he's a giant man with a machine gun arm, a steel jaw, and an infrared camera eye who just got his ass kicked by a small-time vigilante and failed to deliver the goods to his boss. Fans of film noir and true crime whodunits will relish *The Villain's Sidekick*, as it employs classic tactics of both; lush mental visuals of dark and dangerous urban sprawl, unexpected murders with several suspects to investigate, concise storytelling through the inner monologue of a complex protagonist, and dialogue inflected with mob-style slang. A short, fast read, it hits the ground running with action from page one.

Parts of this book bear awkward markers of a first novel. A level of cheesiness is inevitable with superheroes, but monikers like HandCannon, Heatsource, and Nightguard make one wonder whether we're actually talking about industrial-strength cleaning products.

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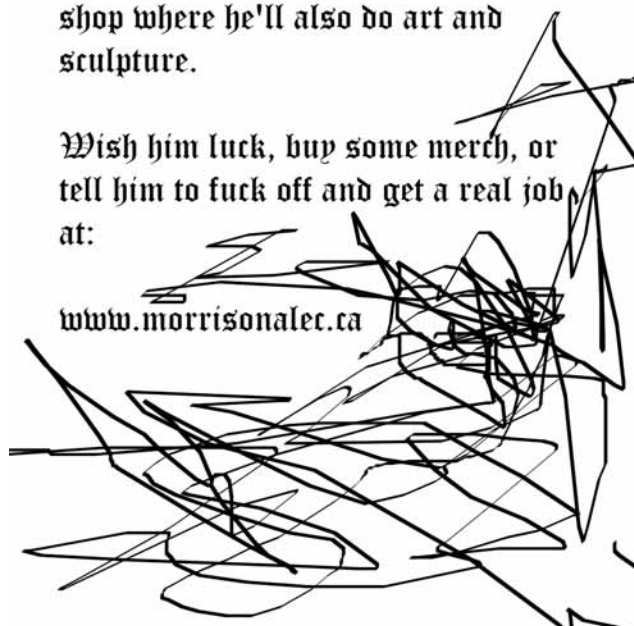


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Female characters are flat and underdeveloped, with descriptions revolving around their sex appeal; Miss Thang, Bitch Goddess, Twiliter. What's a good film noir without a femme fatale, or a strong love interest? A notable exception is Duke's six-year-old daughter, Cordelia, who is the brains of the final operation to take down the bad guy—though in this case, it's technically the good guy. We're on the villain's side, and Duke's nuanced, human relatability is the book's strongest trait. Most punk rockers have been that misfit schmo who takes issue with authority and struggles to make something of themselves in a harsh world. It's pure entertainment, but *The Villain's Sidekick* would make a good quick read on a long plane trip, or perhaps in the back of a van on tour. —Claire Palermo (Budget Press, budgetpress.net)

### Zero Fade

By Chris L. Terry, 293 pgs.

As a young writer and recent addition to Razorcake's list of contributors, I have much ingrained respect for Chris L. Terry (known to Razorcake readers as CT Terry). I approached the book with a sense of obligation to support one punk's venture outside of music, especially in writing, as it always seems to me to be journeying outside the comfort zones of guitar feedback and garbled yells. So I was prepared to find any and every merit possible in *Zero Fade*. I was prepared to scrounge every paragraph and chapter. As luck would have it, the merits and brilliance of Terry's first novel are as obvious as an overpass billboard.

*Zero Fade* is the story of Kevin Phifer, a black seventh grader struggling with his position on the social totem pole of school life during the early '90s, and Paul, his supportive and closeted uncle. Paul is a museum security guard struggling to find a man while juggling his duty as Kevin's role model. Kevin is selfish, constantly avoiding bullies, guided by hard-ons and his longing for Aisha, a classmate who teases him because of his "mushy tushy," and perpetually grounded for talking back to his mama.

The majority of the story unfolds from Kevin's first-person perspective. Kevin is vulgar and clueless, but somehow endearing because of innocent misconceptions. Terry also grants Paul one section per chapter which allows the two narratives to commingle. Paul's portions are brief and written in the third-person, but they add several layers to his character. Overall, the writing is snappy, laser precise, and frequently hilarious. But the jokes often reverberate twice. When Kevin prances around his mother's room in tight red bottoms while imitating and listening to Eddie Murphy, there's a subtle drama developing around the machismo of pop culture and its treatment of homosexuals. (Terry includes several of Murphy's distasteful jokes about "fags.") Although *Zero Fade* is technically a period piece, the societal questions posed and the problematic behavior of Kevin are still very pertinent.

Slowly, Kevin begins to question his own identity. He questions if his haircut is "gay" or if the touch of a gay barber can be contaminating or detrimental to his image. All the while, Paul fears that his relationship with his nephew as both a friend and father figure might be compromised by the knowledge of his sexuality. Paul's internal conflicts and Kevin's childlike vanity read authentically. Paul's struggle is especially endearing as you constantly wish for Kevin to grow up. Luckily, the tone of the novel never detours into PSA territory. Instead, Terry allows the central figures to develop organically. In fact, after Paul comes out to Kevin, the seventh grader is dismayed and forced to confront his own prejudices. Yet, none of the resolutions are squeaky clean nor are they painfully cynical; Kevin's journey into maturation is just as awkward and clumsy as it should be. The final results are an adeptly human novel.

*Zero Fade* is a damn fine read with a resounding message that never preaches, but instead talks to you across the table like a friend and ally. Highly recommended. Chris L. Terry is an author to keep an eye on. —Sean Arenas (Curbside Splendor, curbsidesplendor.com)



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### Cosmic Psychos: Blokes You Can Trust: DVD

I snuck out of work for an hour on a Monday night about fifteen years ago to go see the Cosmic Psychos play an all ages show down the street. I figured nobody'd miss me and I'd hafta be a real douche to not go see the Cosmic Psychos playing a block away. I was likely right on both counts. Since the '80s, this Aussie trio—sort of like the missing link between Cream and the Lurkers, or arguably the antipodal equivalent of the Dictators—has drunkenly thundered out jillions of slabs of ear-pulping muck, and this documentary takes you from their roots ((rural Australian teenagers who somehow get hold of punk records and then there goes the neighborhood)) to the present ((rural Australian fifty-somethings worrying about losing the family farm they've had for three

generations)). Given that this is a band best known for ending its sets with a collective mooning, I was surprised how laid back the interviews were: The principals are shot, individually, relaxing in their cheerfully lit Australian homes. Towards the end, late-stage guitarist Macka eventually hams it up a bit by doing his interview wearing nothing but a pair of blue underwear, with the microphone taped to his chest blubber, but, generally speaking, these are some pretty down-to-earth dudes. Er, *blokes* ((i suppose that's fitting for a band whose principal member, Ross Knight, opted out of the band's first European tour because he'd recently bought a bulldozer)). This laid back, everyman feel extends to the interview segments with some of the band's more high-profile supporters—Eddie Vedder, Butch Vig, Steve Albini—who, by grace of association with Australian bulldozer owners, come off as normal joes a bit more than is their norm. The interviews are occasionally interspersed with brilliant, John Kricfalusi-styled cartoons depicting important moments in band history. The thing that struck me most after watching this was what a full, cool life Ross Knight has led—dude grows up on a farm in the middle of nowhere, starts a band, tours the world, meets all these people, dates a New York S&M queen, winds up getting songwriting royalties on an L7 song that the Prodigy winds up covering, sets world weightlifting records ((“for his age and weight class,” he’ll be quick to point out)), has two kids, and still lives on a farm, goes down to the pub, rocks out, and shows his butt at the end of the night, even though he’s in his fifties. Good on him. *I fucking knew beer made you smarter and more successful!* —Rev. Nørb (MVD Visual, mvdvisual.com)

### In Heaven There Is No Beer: DVD

This is one of the better music documentaries I've seen. I came into it with absolutely no knowledge of L.A.'s Kiss or Kill scene. The only band that I really knew about was the Dollyrots. The film documents the creation of a small, closely-knit music scene in a big city, and how it all fell apart because of the usual bullshit: greed, in-fighting, and

**“That’s fitting for a band whose principal member, Ross Knight, opted out of the band’s first European tour because he’d recently bought a bulldozer.”**

—Rev. Nørb, *Cosmic Psychos: Blokes You Can Trust*

pettiness. There’s a decent amount of live footage, but I could have used a bit more in the bonus section. —MP Johnson (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Rd., Pottstown, PA 19464, mvdvisual.com)

#### **Ten Years War, The: DVD**

Tor Johnson Records has been an integral part of the Providence, RI, and greater New England music scene for over ten years. In May of 2012, a number of past and current bands from the label’s roster came together to celebrate the label’s ten year anniversary. Seeing nearly all of these bands in their primes was a touchstone to life in my early twenties. It was great to see them all come together for a night of music. This DVD does an excellent job of capturing and preserving a show celebrating one of the shining lights of local DIY music and culture. The DVD features highlights of each band’s set, including some of my favorite songs by each band: Saint Jude’s “Extinction Won’t Be So Bad,” Another Dead Juliet’s “Search for the Snow Leopard,” and Weak Teeth’s “Repetition Implies Importance, Implies Importance.” Some of the footage is a bit grainy, particularly the Another Dead Juliet track I mentioned, but the audio quality is great for a live recording, and the footage does a good job of capturing the essence of seeing each band live. This DVD is great not only as a capstone to a decade of amazing

music, but it also shows that the future of Tor Johnson Records looks bright. Here’s to the next ten years! —Paul J. Comeau (Tor Johnson, PO Box 1556, Providence, RI 02901, torjohnsonrecords.com)

#### **Tribute to Ron Asheton: DVD**

Every live video of Iggy Pop performing is important because it is another opportunity to try to determine the source of his power. How is he able to move like that? I’ve had a theory going that he is a highly evolved version of the robo-musicians that used to hang out at Chuck E Cheese and Showbiz Pizza. Upon scrutinizing this DVD, I’ve decided to throw that theory out. No cords. No place for a battery pack. Maybe he’s just a hundred gallons of molten rock and roll living in an impervious skin suit. I don’t know. This DVD isn’t about Iggy anyway. It’s about former Stooges Guitarist Ron Asheton. The current lineup of the Stooges pays tribute the only way they know how—by just destroying everything with music. They get help from Denniz Tek. Old man Rollins even sings a tune. How is it that Henry Rollins is now older than Iggy Pop? Why is nobody else trying to unravel the mystery of Iggy? —MP Johnson (MVD Visual, 203 Windsor Rd., Pottstown, PA 19464, mvdvisual.com)



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